# cooking up collectivity

## introduction & context

Contributions by
Amy Gowen,
Marloes de Vries

so happy together

# introduction & context

**Aperitivo**
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**by Amy Gowen**

**Serving suggestions**
**by Marloes de Vries**



RECIPES/COOKBOOK - ARCHIVE - LIBRARIES - DRAWINGS - ZINE MAKING - MAKING HANDS-ON

Since the infamous "Anarchist Cookbook" of 1971, with its recipes for DIY explosives, drugs, and telecommunications devices, metaphorical and literal cookbooks have become a booming genre in DIY self-published literature. (Recent examples include Amy Suo Wu's "Cookbook of Invisible Writing" and Marc Fischer/Temporary Services' "Meal-Based Artist Residency Program"). Recipes and cookbooks are perhaps the oldest form of DIY literature and publishing. They amount to intergenerational ARCHIVES and bodies of knowledge (see READING - RECYCLING - GIGS) in both personal, domestic, communally self-organised, and institutional LIBRARIES. Along with DIY and communal DRAWING and ZINE MAKING, these forms of writing and publishing allow communities to materialise and form kinship through HANDS-ON MAKING. Interestingly, all of this unfolded as an unplanned dynamic at Roodkapje in 2023-24 when extensive collective WORKSHOP programs involved a lot of cooking and ZINE MAKING, and ultimately resulted in the creation of an anARCHIVE. Similarly at Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam, the most persistent self-organised student initiative was for the creation of a student-run "Food Station" to replace the school's commercial cafeteria and integrate food as a medium of HANDS-ON MAKING into the art school curriculum.

# Aperitivo

## A collective colophon

by Amy Gowen

A typical recipe often relies upon a steady, linear guide where the chosen cook can follow-along, line-by-line, to oversee a controlled experience of something new and scrumptious. We, the co-editors of this publication, wanted to experiment towards a different kind of cooking together with *Cooking up Collectivity*. Using methods that worked with different configurations of being in the editorial 'kitchen' together; time, format, skill, and proximity, we set on a course to entrust one another with applying our different perspectives and approaches towards the shaping of this publication's content. To then see what culinary magic would appear as a result.



This style of cooking reflects, to an extent, not only the ingredients of this publication – the recipes, essays, super subjective lexicon, interviews – that make up much more than the total sum of its parts, but also the methods in which they were assembled. From the very first ingredient – inviting collectives to share their practices and ways of working – to the organising and hosting of events at Roodkapje across 2023 and 2024, in which these practices could come to life – events which require a multitude of visible and invisible labour forms – to the literal, physical assemblage of these pages, which took place during a Book Assembly (as opposed to a Book Launch) event on May 01, 2025. Throughout this entire process, from the commissioning and selection of the book's contents (written and visual), the slicing and dicing of the texts and images, the mixing and blending of the materials to form one cohesive plate, and the final dashes of seasoning, it has all come together through a process of activating the collective hands, eyes, ears, and mouths of many, many, many people.

This book brings together many different written and visual contributions, with the hope that each can sit next to the other to continue to activate and situate the practices through critical, experiential, and reflective means. As a result, this book simultaneously speaks to a series of events that took place at a set place in a set time at Roodkapje, Rotterdam in 2023 and 2024, but also much more broadly to collective, self-organised, and autonomous practices we witness and participate in, more broadly, today.

In order to blend these different elements together, the co-editors of *Cooking Up Collectivity* met across a range of afternoons, mainly in a roasting-hot kitchen (Simon's studio) during the spring and summer of 2024. We spent many further moments together online, in the in-between and aftermath of these sessions, separately and together, to dedicate our collective taste-buds to testing, tasting, shaping and snipping this publication into what you see and read now. Then came Iris, who brought these textual flavours even futher to life through colour, form, texture, typography, and much more. So that, much like a fine wine, she was able to expertly pair the texts with visual components, working closely with Dennis of Hocus Bogus Publishing to find the perfect physical form of presentation. The result is a book that has been co-organised, co-assembled, co-edited, co-designed, and co-produced by a plethora of hands, eyes, minds, visible and invisible labour, and collective forms and practices. The resulting dish: a banquet of self-organising practices, tips, tricks, modes, and models which we hope to keep simmering in our own work and practice, and to form useful recipes for your own.

You may notice the beautiful, colourful rings which bring all of the contents of the publication together (quite literally). These rings can be opened and refastened in order for you to disassemble and reassemble the publication for yourself, to your own preference, in the hope that these small-scale self-organisational and autonomous elements can live on beyond our own direct input into the publication.

We end this collective colophon now with a huge thank you to everyone who worked on making this publication come to life.

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To find out more about our processes you can access our publishing manifesto, manual and open-access publications (and more) at humdrumpress.com

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essay

# Serving Suggestions

by Marloes de Vries

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in collective practices in the arts. This is not surprising as increasing loneliness, individualisation, and social, ecological, economic, and political crises dramatically alter our society. Roodkapje finds these movements hopeful. Moreover, given the recent national election results and genocide in Gaza, collective practices that directly speak to our world and society are more important than ever. Engagement is a powerful antidote to populism and fascism. Through a multi-voiced conversation, the flattening of complex issues into one singular scapegoat becomes all the more difficult. That is why Roodkapje invites its diverse community into engaged citizenship. For us that means the right to shape your own life, but also the duty to stay in an active and curious connection with your environment. Roodkapje aims to be a place where perspectives come together and are exchanged, and where empathy is appealed to and space is made.

To put this ambition into practice, last year we conducted a special study of collective practices. We asked artist and researcher Katinka de Jonge (University of Hasselt) and artist and teacher Simon Kentgens to guide us in this research for a year and to organise various guidelines, experiments, and a public program from their expertise and network. In this, we initially focused on the Hamburger Community. From our preliminary discussions, however, it soon became clear that the residencies were part of a broader collective, the community of Roodkapje, and that the research and the methods we wanted to test must therefore focus mainly out in such a way, as an institution

Artist collectives often arise out of necessity; for subsistence, artistic exchange, or peer support. Although Roodkapje started we have lost sight of that in recent years. Creating space for exchange in an organisation that, due to the high number of activities, has become focused on production, output, and forward-facing momentum, proves to be a challenge. This is also the case for the Hamburger Community, our residency collective who are made up of five different artists who form a temporary collective to together make a year-long programme, despite not directly choosing one another to work with. Roodkapje's residency program has always aimed to foster artistic exchange in a collective manner as part of the experience of the residents.

Yet we noticed that during the residency the focus did not naturally shift towards collectivity and collaboration was often difficult next to the production pace of events and exhibitions. We needed time and guidance to break this pace and invite collectives to inspire us in how they collaborate. The long-term presence and involvement of Katinka de Jonge and Simon Kentgens between 2023 and 2024, as flies-on-the-wall, mediators, organisers, and participants in our program, forced us, as an organisation, back to the drawing board time and again. Together with them, and as a result of the experiences garnered in this pilot year, we have compiled reflections on conditions, methods, and recipes in this publication that serve as a guide for lasting change, both for ourselves and our readers.

on the (artistic) cross-connections *that we facilitate internally, and the way in which we can actively involve an audience in order to (temporarily) expand this community.* Collectivity is not something that can be researched and developed alone, we therefore decided to carry out this experiment directly with our community, publics, and the many different artist collectives that were invited into this space.

This took shape in a series of public activities where a diverse group of collectives were invited to share their different perspectives on artistic collaboration.We invited them for a series of public happenings on collectivity and being together centered around experimental cooking, eating, and digesting as a way of community building. Every event had a different theme and we invited collectives that offered an interesting perspective on each theme.

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We chose an interactive format with workshops, cooking, and field trips. Every event started with a smaller group of participants preparing the food served. Paul Smullenberg, Roodkapje's chef, would invent a new recipe fitting the theme and collectives of that evening. This food would also become part of some of the workshops offered by the collectives. It was very focused on learning by doing.

Following directly from the So Happy Together event series, Willem de Kooning Academy (WdKA) organised sessions around Autonomous Practices as an elective curriculum for all students – including, for example, design, fashion and advertising students. But that demanded a rethinking of what we understand and practice as autonomy, beyond fine art. We learned especially from Non-Western, multidisciplinary collectives that combine artistic, social, activist, and research work, and are made up of both artists and practitioners, and invite neighbors and other people to participate in their activities.

Throughout all of the different activities, food was such an integral part of the series that a compilation of the recipes that were created and shared into a publication format only seemed fitting. Especially as recipes can be interpreted differently depending on who executes it and can be considered as knowledge to be passed along to be (re)activated again and again. This form of activation and exchange provides inspiration and insight into new ways of approaching and doing things.

The past year was quite confronting for us as an organisation; this research forced us to take a critical look at ourselves and realise that if we want to function as a collective within which artistic exchange takes place, we must not only develop a working method. The organisational culture that has ensued must also change with us. So I want to express my thanks to all the artist collectives, Roodkapje community, Simon and Katinka and our residents for the insights, participation, and patience they offered and shared. We have learned to put our conversations at the center, honoring this process while inviting many different perspectives to the drawing board. The necessary slowing down makes our program less rushed thus making collective time all the more possible.

Marloes de Vries - Director Roodkapje

# cooking up collectivity

## support structures

Contributions by
Singing Club Rotterdam,
The Post Collective,
Papaya Kuir

so happy together

# support structures

**Singing Club Rotterdam**
Warming up exercise (manual)

**The Post Collective**
How to not become a token
Adaptation PAACT
Paperless Art Alliance ContracT

**Papaya Kuir**
The Matrix: Contemporary intersectional philosophy

During the various events of SO HAPPY TOGETHER (and especially the SYMPA-SYMPOSIUM) that were organised, we wanted to create a platform for exchange between different collective practices. INVOLVING THE BODY in collective artistic practice was very important. Besides making food each time and thereby appealing to different senses, other somatic practices were also on the MENU. These included LISTENING SESSIONS. The presence or absence of SOUND was an important factor in these evenings, it was both important to sing together and to be allowed to be SILENT together.

SO - HAPPY - TOGETHER - SYMPA-SYMPOSIUM - MENU - SOUND - SILENCE - LISTENING - SESSION - INVOLVE BODIES (IN PRACTICE)

# Singing Club Rotterdam *Warming up exercise (manual)*

recipe

Singing club rotterdam is an anti-choir, sounds funny, is goofy and fun but also serious about welcoming all voices.

Embracing them to be loud and courageous, to explore the unknown, the uncertain…

We imaginatively play with composition, making-up structures for a collective liberation from our imposed normality, becoming child-like and unruly, improvising with sounds, (invented) language, movement, intuitive site-specific choreographies...

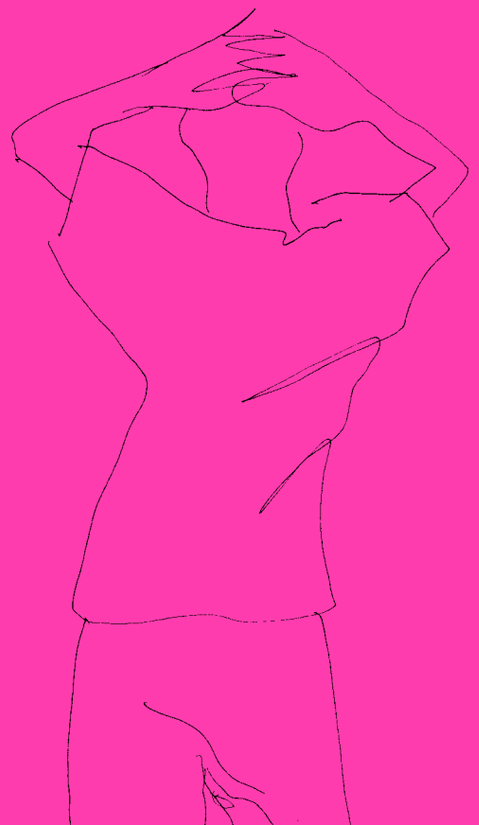
We are a test-ground for ideas. We borrow them, our voices and devotion, nurturing fragments, trusting and allowing insights to emerge. Different clubbers lead the sessions (every two weeks, on Tuesdays 19-21h at Roodkapje). Not one session is similar to another.

Not one voice is the same as another
Everybody has a body and every choir has a voice...

Warming up to each other...

Being present with our bodies, celebrating it with our voices.

Resonating with one another, listening & voicing: all, at the same time.





la la la

# The Post Collective *How to not become a token*

recipe

PAACT (Paperless Art Alliance ContracT) is a document The Post Collective developed in order to negotiate with external parties. The PAACT was introduced to Roodkapje during the So Happy Together event series in September 2023 and later an assembly was formed around it as part of the Sympa-Symposium in March 2024. That year TPC, supported by BNA-bbot, organised five public assemblies, in Belgium and the Netherlands inviting audiences, artists, and cultural workers to reflect on the PAACT and how we can work together.

To read the PAACT in full please visit page 21

**The below transcribed conversation took place in La Loge Brussels in March 2024. A disruptive incident from the collaboration between the collective and Roodkapje curatorial team became a case study on how the PAACT can be applied in action and what difficulties both artists and cultural workers are facing in relation to the WE ARE NOT TOKENS clause of the PAACT.**

## Clause

*WE ARE NOT TOKENS. We are not here to fulfil specific narratives. If you work with us, you have to be in solidarity with our causes and aware that you are an accomplice with the circumstances we live in. Pay us fairly, value our work as any other citizen, artist, or expert in their field. Please make the effort to be in dialogue with our cultures instead of asking us to adapt to the western, white supremacist, colonial, patriarchal and neo-liberal capitalist way of creating and validating work.*

## Discussion

Speaker 1 (So Happy Together organiser)
Yeah. Firstly, it's rather strange for me to speak from the position of an institution, but in this situation, I was indeed inviting The Post Collective in an institutional context. So I was part of the spokespeople of the institution last Thursday. And actually what happened was a misunderstanding, a miscommunication within our communication towards the Post Collective, and also within the institution itself. And I was in between the two things, which was actually based upon the first meeting that we had. We talked about The PoCo participating in our event, which is an event where we brought together a lot of different collectives with different backgrounds, to share their knowledge and their practices, and also to exchange between each other.

The Post Collective was part of this exchange because they participated in another event before. I was explaining what the expectations were from the institutional side, which was that we divided the time into different time slots of 1.5 hours, and each collective got 1.5 hours to present what they wanted to present.

From this conversation I understood – or misunderstood, I don't know – that it is difficult at this moment for The Post Collective to host a 1.5 hour session, and it would be mainly the focus for them to take part in meetings with other collectives in a more informal way.

But then in the following weeks I got really caught up in a rush because we had to finish this thing, and we had to pinpoint all the different elements of the program and make them solid somehow, to give them a form. So we sent an email to The Post Collective in which we actually were taking away some stress, I thought. We proposed to divide their time slot and share it with another collective and let someone from the institution host the time slot, that was the proposal in this email.

But then, of course, I also realised this proposal went against a lot of things that are actually written in the PAACT. Propositions that are saying *"no, let us speak for ourselves. We want to decide what we want to do with the time you are giving us." towards a collective really a moment when I felt this contract working. And I was reading it again and just thinking, like, oh, shit, this is really the mistake that you make when you're coming from an institutional side and trying to work towards a collective.* It was a learning curve and very enriching moment for me, and I hope, well, I don't know if it was for you as well.

It was about thinking through what power actually means in an institutional context. And I think that this is something that is often not talked about. It's a very big taboo actually, I mean, of course, I've been, when working as an artist, also invited by institutions a lot of the time. So I've also stood in the position of The Post Collective a lot of the time. But it's really about these power dynamics that are not fully discussed, and it's always like a kind of pre-given when you are invited as an artist into an institution. So the PAACT was, for me, a very helpful tool, to feel like, okay, this is what these dynamics actually impose onto a group.

Speaker 2 (Assembly participant) I connect with this experience as I worked intimately with an institution last year about negotiating space for work. But when I say working with an institution, I was interfacing with one person. But she was extremely involved in the projects. So she saw it from the inside, like we were more or less on

this similar wavelength. But in the end we failed at the hosting, I think, because the technician was certainly not in on our agreements. The marketing people were not in on our agreements. The audience development department wasn't in on this. So we (with this one person from the institution) had a very beautifully developed relationship that was truly supporting the work. But at the same time we had a production meeting from hell where we were asked: *"But why are you here, at this moment? This meeting should have happened six months ago, why is it not communicated? No, you cannot build a structure like this in a month, because this is just not possible."* And then we were like, no, but we are three months too fast, actually, for our process. So we are really running, to catch some sort of logic of production. We lost our production manager after that meeting. It just made us feel like terrible artists. But that wasn't the case. And the institution knew that, but still, it became this strange – sorry, it's a long story, but it's just about: how do these differences get communicated to an institution that has eight contact people at any given time?
How do you do that?



Speaker 3 (Assembly participant)
Okay. So, it's really a good point that is being raised. And of course as a worker in an institution I also faced this because of the collectives I'm bringing, and the artists that I have conversations with, face the same problems that I face inside of the institution. So it's like this thing that you're talking about, having contact with one person. This is very correctly observed. There is such a capitalist logic and such a speed that is imposed upon us. I was thinking about the concrete implications, for example if you have to share everything with the whole team, and this takes such a long time that they are not willing to give. I will talk about myself initiating a project within my institution. Last year we launched with a colleague of mine – so I do programming, and my colleague does public development – we launched a project for Ramadan and included people from Muslim communities to co-facilitate them coming to the theatre. We were not considered sufficiently by some coworkers. They were aware of our plans, but acted like it was not communicated to them clearly or quickly enough. Rather than engaging in a dialogue, asking questions or trying to make things work collectively, they were pointing back to a system that is very structured, and that they're not so willing to change. So even within the institution, if you're not following the structure that has been imposed on you, it's not going to work smoothly. This being said, I believe that somehow you can find a way. It will take some friction. A lot of headaches. So I really also personally relate to you, and I'm sorry to hear this.

Now to this question on collectives: where I work, we work a lot with collectives. There is even 20% of the program that is dedicated to this functioning. This was a policy that was established before me, but that I also support. I think it's interesting. It's collectives and people who don't get enough support or funding that are invited by the institution. You talk about this trendiness of collectives. So, I'm 28, and I think I started hearing about it about ten years ago when I started going out and getting more into activism, artistic scenes, whatever. So for me, it's not so new. But maybe I lack some wisdom and perspective. And I think what is interesting in collectives: it's the promise of a community, you know, so as an institute you think: okay, this is greater than one person, these people have a network, and they are doing something that is a bit more relevant than just one voice. And then because you have this idea now that in theatres we should make space for communities and broader audiences, then, of course an easy way to achieve this – which is not easy, I'm a bit sarcastic – is to invite a collective, and then this will fix your issue. Because they have a community, they're welcome in the theatre. Then this poses all of the questions that have been raised! The reality of a collective of people who have day jobs is never the same as the realities [like temporalities, realities, finances] of the people who are getting paid every day with their office jobs.

This year we worked with a particular collective that is full of people who don't receive a salary. And some adjustments are always needed to be made, especially around things that seem inevitable to the institution, but that require acts of negotiation. Often, in the end, they do let go of these things. But it takes so, so, so long. Only after a year and a half, they understood okay, these people are not answering my email six months in advance. I cannot ask this from them. So what is now being done is to create structure, to foresee the unforeseeable. For example: the collective will ask you something last minute. So you know this by now, so maybe you can block this time in your schedule. Because you have nothing but time to schedule. They don't have time to schedule. So please schedule that you will need to fix something last minute. So I think these very concrete things also come with concrete work.

To talk about practicalities is something extremely structural, that is addressed beforehand and that is discussed within production houses. Because so many production houses work with so many collectives, and this is still not something that everyone really gave some thought about. How do you manage that these people were not funded, and you are funded, how is this addressed? How much time do you spend? Which communication or support do you provide? Now we're at a point where we are not from ground zero, but it sometimes feels like we're starting everything from scratch every time, you know? But I think an institution cannot always address everyone. So it creates some confusion. Basically clarity is good.

The thing that I want to say is that I think writing the PAACT is valuable work. It's important work, and it really highlights how institutions belong to us as well, our tax money funds them, and we should feel that these spaces are ours to inhabit.

Speaker 4 (The Post Collective member)
I want to add something about being ungovernable and react to what you're saying, because if you are being anti-hierarchical, you don't have one person with whom the institution communicates with. It's messy because somebody from the institution speaks with one member and at the same time somebody else from the collective speaks with another person from the institution. If the institution doesn't already know that this will happen, especially with decisions that have to be made on the spot, they get very frustrated. And then the problems start. They can become aggressive, or the communication ends badly.



Somebody mentioned payments, I think for us, we are almost never paid well enough. Often we are paid for three people or something. I remember there were some moments that we were all paid, as individual artists, but it happened 3 or 4 times.

On the trendiness of the collectives, I think whoever comes from activism, they were always in collectives. I think it's just in the art world that it entered recently in this magnitude. It's a good thing, but the institutions and the artists have to understand what they're doing, because there is no education in the arts on how to build a collective or how to hold collective space. It's more what you were saying, that you have the individual artist that says, I have a collective, but then they just have a group of people working for them.

Speaker 3 (Assembly participant)
I want to react to your non-hierarchy. I think that time is so precious in these exchanges because it's time that you're not always so well paid for. And it's time that the institution does not have or doesn't think they have. So I don't think that non-hierarchical means that there's so many contact persons. I would perceive it as more interesting if you would say: one person is the contact for this, one person is contact for that. So there are less things that are lost in translation and less frustration. Because I think that a good distribution is also non-hierarchical, and much less confusing. I think that generally, things that make us lose time should be scrapped because then we have time for these important conversations. I think that it's much nicer, for example, for the whole team to read the PAACT, discuss it with the collective and ask questions. And then to keep mostly one contact person for practical aspects. I think this would be much more enriching than this idea of: *"we are all the same, so you can talk to all of us"*.

Speaker 5 (The Post Collective member)
But I don't believe that we lose time because when we are doing everything together, we are learning together. So I don't believe that we are losing time at all. I mean I hear what you are saying, but it's actually a learning process for everyone instead of only one person who would keep learning this skill or updating it. You have everyone that can engage.

Speaker 3 (Assembly member)
But reporting is not the same as working. So I'm really talking about this communication because this is also a point of friction that was raised. So it's about this communication that is problematic, not about working together and collectively engaging. There can also be moments of collective engagement that are thought about thoroughly and that then produce more than just saying that anyone will communicate. You know what I mean?

Speaker 4 (The Post Collective Member)
But it's important to allocate time for all this because I think that's the biggest problem. In the PAACT we have the second clause: "We are not tokens." Everybody wants to work with a collective but they want to work fast. It's like: "Okay, you are invited, you have two hours to do your thing, and then you go." But we are like: "Wait, you are asking for a collective of ten people to do something. So you have to take time, meet with us, talk, read the PAACT, think things through." Because usually what happens, and I think that we are getting traumatised every time, is that we are invited because we are a collective and because we are people with limited rights, at least some of us. So it's like two things that it draws institutions to work with us. But they don't have the time to work with us. So then we are stuck again in reproducing the same trauma, like in another Flemish city, where there was no audience invited by the institution for our assembly. The people who came were doing a tour of the exhibition around us, and we were standing there in the middle, like a human zoo. And the curator pointed at us: "ah yes these are immigrants, they do this project." Some of us understand Dutch, we could hear what they were saying. And I'm sure that the people from there had all the good intentions, but at the same time, they reproduced the same violence that we experience every time. Because they did

not think inviting us should also go together with developing an audience who was interested to hear what we had to say…

Speaker 6 (Assembly participant)
But this also has to do with the conception of art nowadays. It cannot be just a collective who has this pressure of time. It's also individual artists who face institutions. And there is always this time issue coming up. There is a mass production of art. There is a saturation in Belgium, there is too much going on. Every evening there is a show. It's brilliant, I love it.

Speaker 7 (Assembly participant)
Have you come across institutions that have a similar manifesto? That work in similar ways? Or do you, before you work with institutions, actually ask how you work? And so you can make a choice if to step into that boat or not? Or does that just make it impossible to be working with institutions in the end?



Speaker 8 (Assembly participant)
I think that's a very good question because it's really about protocols, isn't it, that institutions have particular protocols, but they became normalised under the banner of professionalisation. And so they don't really have to make them explicit, because that's how things go. And the one that deviates from it needs to make their protocols known. Like: "This is how it works. This is how we work." And if the protocols are not compatible, well, I find it normal that institutions have different protocols than a collective. But what is not normal is that they have – and I think that's really the problem of the 80s and the 90s – made it invisible or they have made it self obvious. I often have that moment when there's a clash of protocols between, say, my work and an institution – it can happen very quickly – and I am put away as so unprofessional. That it's like: "oh, this, don't you know that?" There's something about the pride of Flemish logic, or the history of institutionalisation and being successful at that. It's a field that has expanded and has professionalised to the extent that it is normalised, and at the same time it has made it invisible that these are particular protocols that are not always compatible with someone who's not a certain kind of artist or has a certain kind of system of operating. And that's why I think it is very fruitful to have these clashes. I mean, they're painful, but they're really saying something. I try to think also: maybe we need to go back to a situation where institutions also need to make their protocols explicit. For example: *"Do you know that our PR department is working like this?"* Why not do that? I mean it's really a matter of saying: how can we work? How can we work together on this sort of thing?

Speaker 9 (Assembly participant)
I wanted to catch up on some things. And I always like in groups that you can share your own problems and then you get some answers. So I'm gonna just drop my own problems. The first problem with a code of conduct was the normativity it implies. And then I spoke to some groups, and some of them have a really interesting way of looking at it. They call it guidelines of collaboration, and see it more as a document that can generate something that they don't know is going to happen. The discussion here was like, okay, this also generates something because you get confronted with something. I also like to think about collectives and conflicts. You don't hear these words together often, and now we're speaking about conflict between institution and collective, but you also have a lot of conflicts in collectives. So I like to think about: how are conflicts generative in collectives? Because the idea, and maybe that's old school or something, it's that everyone sees collectives as being "happy together" or something...?

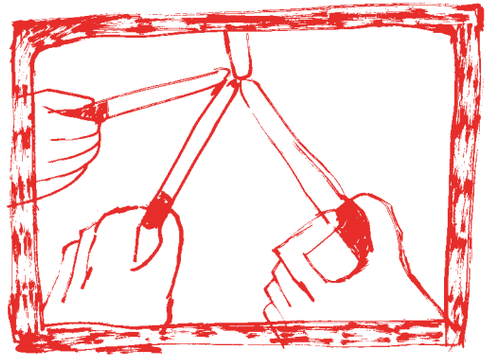
## The Post Collective

Since 2018, when our collective came into existence in Belgium, we have been invited to participate in numerous events and exchanges with artists, institutions, and communities. Over these encounters, we generated disparate questions and addressed issues on participation, inclusion, collectivity, solidarity, integration, place-making, cultural activism & politics, and other aspects of artistic and cultural production.

After harvesting and reflecting on the experience of participating and showing up to various environments and contexts, the urgency arose to design a 'PAACT' that would offer a set of mutually agreed conditions from which we could work - within and beyond - the collective. Our intention is to ensure that we could enter a safer space, one that offers clear outlines of expectations, and guidelines on how a collective of precarious people might engage with art making and collaborating with institutions and individuals.

## Paperless Art Alliance ContracT (PAACT)

Questions of equality and proper recognition of the collective and its members needed to be addressed within the "PAACT". We hope that this document can become a tool for further dialogue and that it can be adoptable and adaptable for other collectives, groups or individuals, as we present it here as a prototype for formulating agreements along the same lines.





https://voice.ThePostCollective.be

# Paperless Art Alliance ContracT (PAACT)

between the parties:

WE: ..... collective/ artist
YOU: ..... artist / institution / group
or other agreeing party
*please check the boxes on the paragraphs applicable to WE (the aforementioned party)*

WE ARE A COLLECTIVE. As such, we seek to build and maintain a brave space for reflection through active listening, interdependence and open exchange. We invite you to join us in the spirit of collectivity.



☼ **WE ARE HERE** Whatever is our current legal status, we stand here amongst you, claiming our right to exist equally in a society that excludes us as surplus. By this contract we claim our legal entity in the society of citizens.

☼ **WE SEEK ANOTHER WORLD** We seek to discover and use new modes for artistic and social circulation, materialisation and output. Where the well-being of individuals, communities and the environment are valued over financial profit and cultural capitalism. This means creating greater equity, inclusiveness and sustainability both within our collective, in the institutions we work with and in the broader society. We would like to highlight this is not an attempt to only open up a window to the struggles of (paper-less) artists or cultural workers but this is a fight with ethical, cultural, and social implications that create an imagination for another world.

☼ **WE ARE ARTISTS** While not fixated on what art is, we look to what it can bring about. We take artistic positions by engaging with all our senses for both human and non-human ecologies and futures.

☼ **WE ARE NOT TOKENS** We are not here to fulfil specific narratives. If you work with us, you have to be in solidarity with our causes and aware that you are an accomplice in the circumstances we live in. Pay us fairly, value our work as any other citizen, artist or expert in their field. Please make the effort to be in dialogue with our cultures instead of asking us to adapt to the western, white supremacist, colonial, patriarchal and neo-liberal capitalist way of creating and validating work.

☼ **WE ARE NON-HIERARCHICAL** Refrain from dividing us or attempting to identify and assign a leader.

☼ **WE TAKE TIME** We require more time to make decisions and come to agreements than usually allocated by most institutions or organisations, as it takes more time to arrive at truly collective and non-hierarchical decisions and solutions. Recognise the efforts we do and the nature of our work as more time and resource-consuming.

☼ **WE ARE POROUS** As we aim to grow, connect and expand into the world on multiple fronts and directions simultaneously.

☼ **WE EXPERIMENT** Meetings and presentations aspire to be spontaneous, inclusive, and ultimately transformative. Our ways of conducting dialogue are under constant process of revision, observation and fluidity. We welcome polyphony and cacophony as tools that ensure maximum inclusion for everyone involved. We ask you to be open to such lateral and flexible modes of communication and participation.

☼ **WE USE ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS** Solidarity in the collective means taking active responsibility for our interrelationships on a glocal level. Join us in imagining and thinking about alternative modes of economy and access to common resources. Our way of working is as important as the outcomes. Payment should be calibrated on providing sufficient support for individual members of the collective.

☼ **WE SEEK TRANSPARENCY** We ask you to be transparent and open when declaring and promoting your ways of working, organising and making culture. This includes admitting blind spots, biases and failures as a part of establishing empathic collaborative modes of re-imagining the world and the place that art holds within it. This also means communicating your rules, strategies, affordances, sensitivities and audience specificities.

☼ **WE ARE ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES** The state can call us in at any time for an interview, discussion, or investigation. These calls cannot be rescheduled; not showing up in these meetings could even be a reason for losing our case and being deported. We require understanding and flexibility when such issues may block or prohibit our planned meetings or even presentations.

☼ **WE ARE PAPERLESS** The state has marked us as illegal or under process. It might be that we cannot work with legal contracts the same way you work with artists with full civil or employment rights. We need your help and advice to find the best way to create a fair payment for us all. In cases of unresolved legal status, an effort needs to be adapted to the specific situation and subjective conditions.



☼ **WE ARE TRAUMATISED** You need our consent on how you communicate about us and in what way you program us in events. We refuse to be racialised, othered or made to relive our traumas in front of anybody. Please inform other participating artists of our presence as audience and contributors, so they can take care of their content and language. We appreciate trigger warnings. We ask you to check your privilege and take a stance of care and use positive discrimination.

☼ **WE ARE ANGRY** Our response to injustice,

exclusion and discrimination is anger. Anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in the painful process of this translation that we identify who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies. Anger between peers births change, not destruction but a sign of growth.

☼ **WE ARE PARENTS** Our children's well being will always be our number one priority. As migrant parents, we lack the financial resources and network of family and friends to support us; not to mention the racism and degradation we experience in social services. Sometimes it is difficult to show up at events and planned residencies because of unexpected issues and obligations as there is no other structure to take care of us than ourselves.

☼ **WE ARE EXHAUSTED** General precariousness creates extremely fragile mental and physical states. From the difficulty to find housing, to battling PTSD, sometimes we just can't.

☼ **WE NEED TO BE LOVED** In a system that rejects us as human beings, refuses our rights to live and prosper, we need you to create together with us this microcosm where we are accepted, respected and loved. This is the only way to work together and change, little by little, this unfair world, so we can stand side by side as equals in art and in life.

☼ **WE HAVE SO MUCH (LOVE) TO GIVE** We do not need charity, we know the immensity of the value we bring to the table. Because we have been excluded from the world of art and nation state, we take nothing for granted. We have the potential to radically rethink society, politics and art making in a world that is constantly unfolding. Sometimes you will feel we speak a different language, but please listen. There is so much love, hope and courage to give, be open to receive it and partake in it.

Any disputes shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the collective of peers and your own conscience.

Read and agreed on ..... date

Signed by: .....
The Collective: .....
The collaborating artist /
institution / group: .....

## **Papaya Kuir** *The Matrix, Contemporary intersectional philosophy*

[...] is a living workshop that grows and is formed each time we give the workshop. Using the Matrix to map the systems we live in. Who has the power in this system? A system based on the exploitation of people, the land, and its resources in a huge web full of treaties, contradictions, and violence. In the workshop we look at this web/the Matrix together, in doing so, we immerse ourselves into the cracks.

Part of a system you don't want to be part of.

What can we do to make things better in an unsustainable system that doesn't have our best interest on the agenda?

One of the most important things we've learned from this workshop is to remember that many, if not all the rights we have, exist because people fought for them. People fought against institutions that were far more abundant in resources than them. Race rights, workers' rights, the disassembling of colonisation, lgbtqi+ rights, women's rights,
differently abled rights: all claimed, not given.
The power of the people and their determination for a dignified life also shapes this web we are in.

**SYSTEM**

**Armies**
**Banks**
**Big Business**

**ISOCIAL**

**Social media**
**Puts people in a bubble**
**Is made to polarise**
**It's hard to have productive discussions**
**INDIVIDUAL**
**Lost empathy, people don't care**
**Individual responsibility**
**Feeling of uselessness, disempowerment**
**SPACES**
**RESOURCES**
**RESISTENCIA**
**History of resistance**
**Colonisation**
**Race, gender, class rights**
**Hip Hop**

# Papaya Kuir contribution to So Happy Together

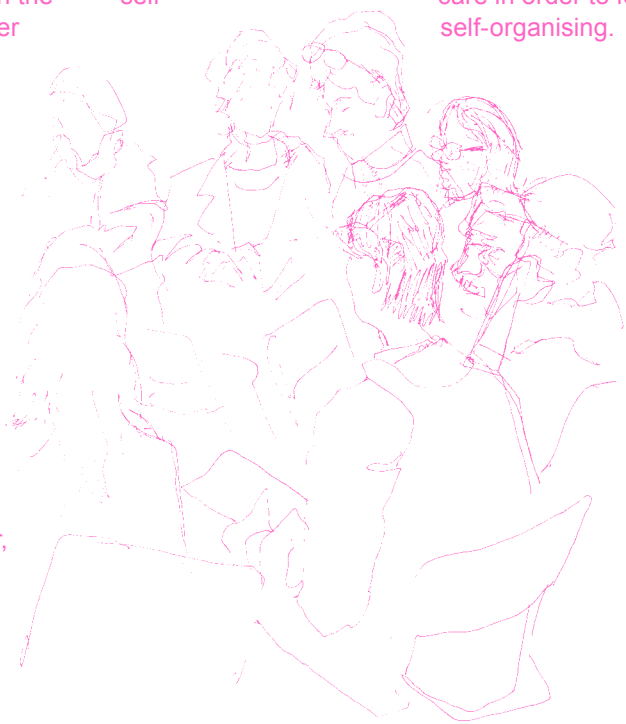
**Reflection**

In April we took part in the symposium, How to continue self-organisation, at Roodkapje in Rotterdam. As Papaya Kuir, we have been engaged in this topic for the past four years, constantly improving and learning as a collective. During our workshops the participants were very open and curious about the different work we do. We discussed what we face as migrants in the Netherlands, how we collaborate with other groups, and how we create community. Participants were asked about their own communities and how they can start building new bridges and uniting forces. Through our exercises the participants connected using music-based non-verbal communication, and were later encouraged to share their own cultural rituals, and imagine collectively what society might look like using our Matrix method.



At the end of the day we shared our reflections with everyone in the symposium plenary. It was interesting to see some of the same struggles reappear, and to note which kinds of solutions each group had come up with. Regenerative self-organisation is a topic which could and needs to be processed and talked about in depth with dedicated time. Hopefully, this symposium spreads rings in the water for all participants involved.

After the programme it was very valuable to talk to other collectives about how they navigate the different challenges their groups face, especially as they grow and are responsible for bigger communities. We came to the conclusion that the internal processes within the core group are very important, they are fractals that reflect back into our work and our communities. Thus, as collectives we must be, and are, prioritising self-care in order to keep self-organising.



# cooking up collectivity

## collaboration

Contributions by
Questions Collective, Reading Room
Rotterdam, Roodkapje,
Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats

so happy together

# Collaboration

**Questions Collective**
Some sort of bag

**Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats**
Getting down to the nuts and bolts of collective organising

**Roodkapje recommendations**
Create a PAKT together

**Reading Room Rotterdam**
Library as commons/connector

The curse of PRODUCTION. An overpowering modus operandi/state of being. Again and again we hop from project to project. Everyone is called on their RESPONSIBILITIES, we work [illegible] responsibilities are assigned in the form of specific TASKS. Each production consists of tasks, which everyone has to carry out. But if someone does not fulfil their tasks, CONFLICTS arise and the production chain collapses. How can we deal with these conflicts? It requires another attitude with more space for MAINTENANCE. Maintenance of social relations, maintenance of everything to do with the conditions of production: the UNPRODUCTIVE and REFLECTIVE side of our labour. The distinction between these three concepts: PRODUCTION, UNPRODUCTION and REFLECTION can be a beginning of a suitable TOOL to get out of the PRODUCTION trap.

PRODUCTION - RESPONSIBILITIES - TASKS - CONFLICTS - MAINTENANCE - TOOLS

# Questions Collective *Some sort of bag*

recipe

'Did you know that probably one of the first tools humanity created was some sort of bag?' QC member Tessel came back from a lecture on design she attended and enthusiastically spoke about how we, as a species, are limited when it comes to moving stuff around. Therefore humans crafted bags to carry items with us. *Basically she gave a very short introduction into Ursula Le Guin's Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction (1988).*

Maybe a collective also functions as a tool in itself, as some sort of bag. Being part of a collective means you do not have to carry the world, e.g. precarious working conditions, sexism, or racism by yourself. You carry it together. Questions Collective started from the need to meet up with other artists and to chat about aspirations and challenges. To share the workload as a self employed artist in post-fordist times (read: being a creative, a bookkeeper, a sales agent, a web developer, a manager, assistant and caterer – all by yourself). This way of working, of being a bag, is a way of dealing with Capitalism. Because you work from a base of collectiveness, trust, and sharing.



But how about the tools we create as a collective? What are the qualities of those tools?

Changeability like life in general, most probably things will change within your collective or your surroundings. A tool should change with you. Don't get stuck into doing things that once worked for you, but don't anymore. 'That is how it was always done' is a dangerous motivation.

☠☠☠

Helping you with things you are not good at
Like we need a bag for carrying things. We need tools to be able to open up and talk about sensitive topics; we need tools to ask for help.

Playfulness A tool should ideally make difficult things more fun. Playfulness helps. Gamification can help you in truly understanding that you can start over. Again and again. Go back to start! Furthermore, we think tools can be divided into categories.

To understand ourselves as a collective being
as a creature. How many hands does this creature have to create new work, to write mails to curators? How many stomachs need to be fed? What is important for it to stay alive? QC created a map to understand how we work and communicate. Warning: don't get stuck in 'fixed' job descriptions and endless bureaucrazy. Don't be the Belastingdienst (Dutch Tax Office).

To keep it together
E.g. an agenda or a way to order your documents in the cloud. If no-one knows when your next meeting is, you won't be able to meet one another. You need some rules and structure to hold you.

To deal with stupid things
Acknowledge what you don't like and share those tasks, create a schedule. Create an alter ego for who might enjoy it. It is very easy! Just start with: 'Today my name is Dominic Swoefelbank.

# Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats *Getting down to the nuts and bolts of collective organising*



recipe

The Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats began humbly in 2009 as a pair of green workbenches placed against the wall of a vacant former butcher's shop on the Vlietlaan, Rotterdam. Initiated from the squatting movement, the activists were first interested in the belief that empty spaces should be put to community use. From this belief the formation of a pragmatic gathering space followed naturally; a resource that's useful for the everyday life of a wide range of people: to build and repair bicycles. By working with this essential element of living in the Netherlands in both a practical way and a relational way – community repair – the expansive potential and definition of the space clicked with such a variety of people, for a variety of reasons. And this remains very true until today, 15 years later. Engaging enthusiastically and curiously with the 'problem' of an uneven-arrival was the topic of our workshop at Roodkapje.

*The following was not originally written as a recipe of our work per se. Yet through the process of writing this text, the core components that make Doe-Het-Zelf what it is – our basic tenets of organising, the values of our work, the rules of the space, our expectations and protocols around time, money, and contributions – emerged. Therefore, though not strictly a cooking guide, this text can be pieced together as an underlying how-to-of-sorts in getting down to the "nuts and bolts" of collective organising.*

From the very beginnings of Doe-Het-Zelf, the growth of the people using and maintaining the space evolved and continued from the uneven paths of arriving into the space. Meaning that many neighbours got involved and invested in growing and defending the space because they found it so useful – while others became highly interested because they felt an affinity with real or perceived politics of reclaiming space, sharing economies, reuse and repair, knowledge exchange, etc.. Others still maybe found a space to meet new friends, or to give back their skills and expertise, or to learn something new. While the space formed around a few basic tenets of 'free' and 'autonomous' (from government financing/permission), most of any other values have never been written down or clearly stated. Even the few rules that were communicated, such as not lending out the tools and using the donated parts for repairs in the space only, have since been modified, albeit in a flexible way. Alongside this, the definition of who is 'a part' of the space – a volunteer – and who is a visitor, or who is a friend of the space within the wider community or network of concerned persons, is a perpetually blurred line that bleeds from one 'generation' to another. The contributions to the space come from many sources and in many ways, and it wouldn't be inaccurate to express how difficult it would be to count the number of people who would feel personally invested in helping the space continue if (and when) it reaches a crisis. In this context the space is a fascinating experiment in a very long ongoing debt of reciprocal generosity, informally passing down (or forward) assistance, skills, knowledge and, whether consciously or not, values.

For this reason, we opened up the space of the workshop at Roodkapje as an opportunity for the current constellation of volunteers, along with participants both familiar and new to DHZ, to begin to map out the variety of values and depictions of what happens and what is important about what happens at DHZ. This begins from the premise that the Doe-Het-Zelf is an important space for Rotterdam and the role it plays in the city; evident by the constant influx of people who pick up where the previous left off. The space then is intrinsically a commons with common issues – implicated in public concern, as if it were a civic infrastructure. So we intended to identify the tensions within the werkplaats that remain elusive to discuss, so that we can think together as a broader 'communal politic'.

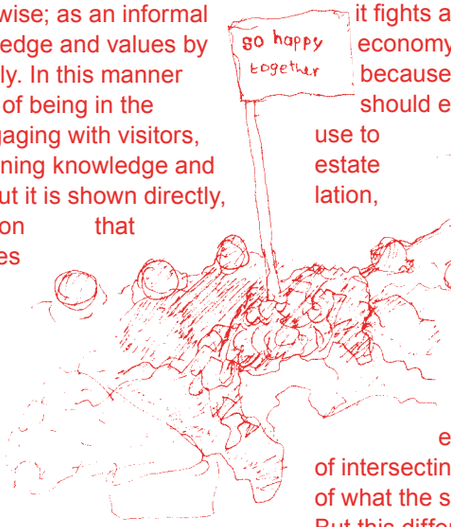


We began in response to the question posed by the symposium, "How do we continue self-organisation". While the intensifying pressure on real estate and housing markets has led to many collective and autonomous spaces losing their ground or becoming increasingly reliant on commercial or subsidised financing, the Doe-Het-Zelf is unique in persisting as a physical space with no rent, operating entirely on volunteer efforts. The uniqueness of this ongoing a-financial persistence intrigues us (for the moment) to stave off stichting-ification as long as possible; to keep the debt unreconciled, to test the limits and duration of the gift economy, and challenge ourselves to learn and practise how to sustain self-managed infrastructure without a financial (contractual) imperative. And that is not to say that an organisation without financing is 'better or worse' as a political position, but it is relatively unique – in Rotterdam – to function for over 15 years as an informal shifting collage of persons willingly (re)generating an everyday accessible resource.

Leading from this conversation (and many more), we broke out into groups to work through our dilemmas; from transitioning between generations of volunteers, our relations to new neighbourhoods, which communities we serve, how to create continuity and visibility to a wide range of values and interests within the changing collective, if protocols are needed for the organisation of money, space etc. We called this "getting down to the nuts and bolts" of collective organising, since we simultaneously organised all of our misplaced nuts, bolts, spokes and nipple ends – as both a fidget device and meditative hands practice, reminiscent of political conversations over meticulous group work from sewing to sifting lentil grains.

*"How do we establish protocols when the collective is constantly in flux over time, and with very different interests for each person? How do we develop a collective understanding of how we approach certain situations, practices, etc: How do we decide how to operate the workshop? How do we even know what each other's values and interests are?"*

When we describe the manners of the workshop as 'dilemmas' or 'tensions', we mean to signify that it is not immediately apparent which path the collective should take in response to manners that have developed over the years. It is first a recognition that there are multiple possibilities, and various ways of working that might be in contradiction. Or simply put, they are tensions because the collective, as a collective, has not made its position clear. For instance, one beginning observation is that typically rules, regulations, and people practising them is what creates continuity – meanwhile the DHZ does not have such regulations, but it has nonetheless operated with some form of continuity for over 15 years with different people. This is at least interesting, but it also points to a potential tension: should it continue as it does, because that is interesting, or should this be addressed? Is it working? Or is it precariously on the edge of rot and combustion for 15 years? The current manner could be studied even, or looked at in ways that gives value to its operation. Perhaps it is an example of how regulation works otherwise; as an informal passing down of knowledge and values by performing them directly. In this manner the interests and ways of being in the space, the ways of engaging with visitors, of transferring and opening knowledge and skills, is not dictated, but it is shown directly, by doing. And the person that is new to the space sees that, experiences it, and makes their own decision about how to take that in, how to respond, and how to either follow or deviate. That could be studied to see if it is working in the way we hope for it to, or if the new person needs to be integrated by a 'code of conduct' or another such document *in order to see* the values being transferred in the act of doing. This 'dilemma' is amplified by the magnitude of fluctuation and diversity within the collective and it would be tricky yet interesting to pin down a set of values that are being performed in the space, and to keep track of what volunteers and visitors have communicated to one another as values and expectations (a compiling work that would be done in spare time, might we add.) Altogether it suggests a balance exists between varied interests and something in the space that must be binding us together.




One example we discovered in our reflections is that one person might join the workshop because they have a lot of interest in repair and because it fights against consumerist disposable economy. While another person joins because they believe local communities should emancipate the land for common use to fight against real estate speculation, and they might even think that the issue of repair/anti-waste is not important at all! These two people would then describe the space entirely differently. And we could make a long list of intersecting and dissecting interests and views of what the space does (as with many spaces). But this difference shows up in how those two people approach new visitors to the space. The second person saw the primary role of the space

as making themselves welcoming and accessible to the neighbourhood, and made it a personal task to go out of their way anytime a neighbour came to visit for the first time, especially if they were of a migrant background. Whereas the first volunteer may not register this priority and is instead focused on making networks with other repair cafes to build an urban circularity economy. Then a question arises: what role does the space play in the neighbourhood? How involved does it become with the lives of inhabitants, or in mediating fights between kids? Does it exist as a resource for the city that has to be somewhere, or is it an active force in forging relationships across social differences and against gentrification in the neighbourhood it is in? And so on.. These tensions become revealed when we see how the space is practised *differently* depending on the perceived aims of the persons involved. And it could have consequences in *presenting* different objectives at the same time, potentially to the detriment of the other. If one person sees interaction as a priority, is that person ok if other people are not explicitly making their body language accessible? Is this co-existing difference the beauty of an autonomous space? And yet, similarly to the terminology of 'autonomy', we might think we are all talking about the same thing, while we actually all mean something entirely different from one another without realising it, until we really commit to mapping out our differences. And even then we can still stay in the difficulty that such spaces are unique in all of the aspects that are perceived. The Doe-Het-Zelf is one of very few repair cafes, or collectives focused on bikes, or financially autonomous plots of land,so the competing definitions and their subsequent practices hold validity.

Interestingly, we have made shared and agreed upon descriptions. And it's not that hard to come to a consensus about what's important, especially when it's a common thread that clearly pulls us all to the space. And in our case it was having a safe place to learn. Somehow it became evident very easily that this is foundational to the space.

Otherwise, this example is just one 'dilemma' out of a long list of potential tensions that range from values, to how the space is practised on an everyday level, to how the space is organised as a structure. We used the workshop at Roodkapje as a call to begin this project of discussing and mapping all of these potential tensions which deserve our awareness and deliberation. Our heads are heavy with accumulated experience and observation and we very much hope to continue this task of externalising our potential into forms we all can enter and point at for reference. Perhaps this surprises us with what new forms of involvement it encourages, from people with new perspectives, or that engage through more clarified modes of organising. We are curious to see what practices and approaches it leads us towards, and we are especially excited about what kind of social infrastructures it can stabilise over the long term.



# Roodkapje Recommendations *Create a PAKT together*

by Marloes de Vries

**Create a PAKT together**
The Hamburger Community creates a new PAKT with Roodkapje's community each year, it outlines five basic principles on which the collaboration is built.

**Soft Landing**
Start each residency period with a playful introduction day where Roodkapje's community and residents get to know each other through playing and doing.

**Recognise and facilitate different forms of collectivity**
Collaborate where there is need, artistically, supportively, or collaboratively.

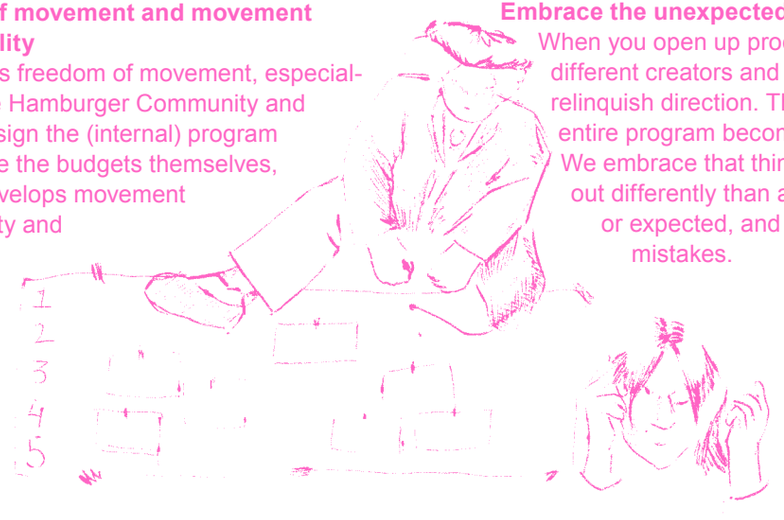
**Freedom of movement and movement responsibility**
Give makers freedom of movement, especially within the Hamburger Community and let them design the (internal) program and manage the budgets themselves, this also develops movement responsibility and promotes mutual trust.

**Soup Sessions and Citizen Councils**
Roodkapje's community is our wealth and we must put conversation at the center of it all. To listen to different perspectives on a substantive and artistic level, we facilitate moments where we exchange ideas with each other. We do this in a safe space, an environment where there is room for different voices.

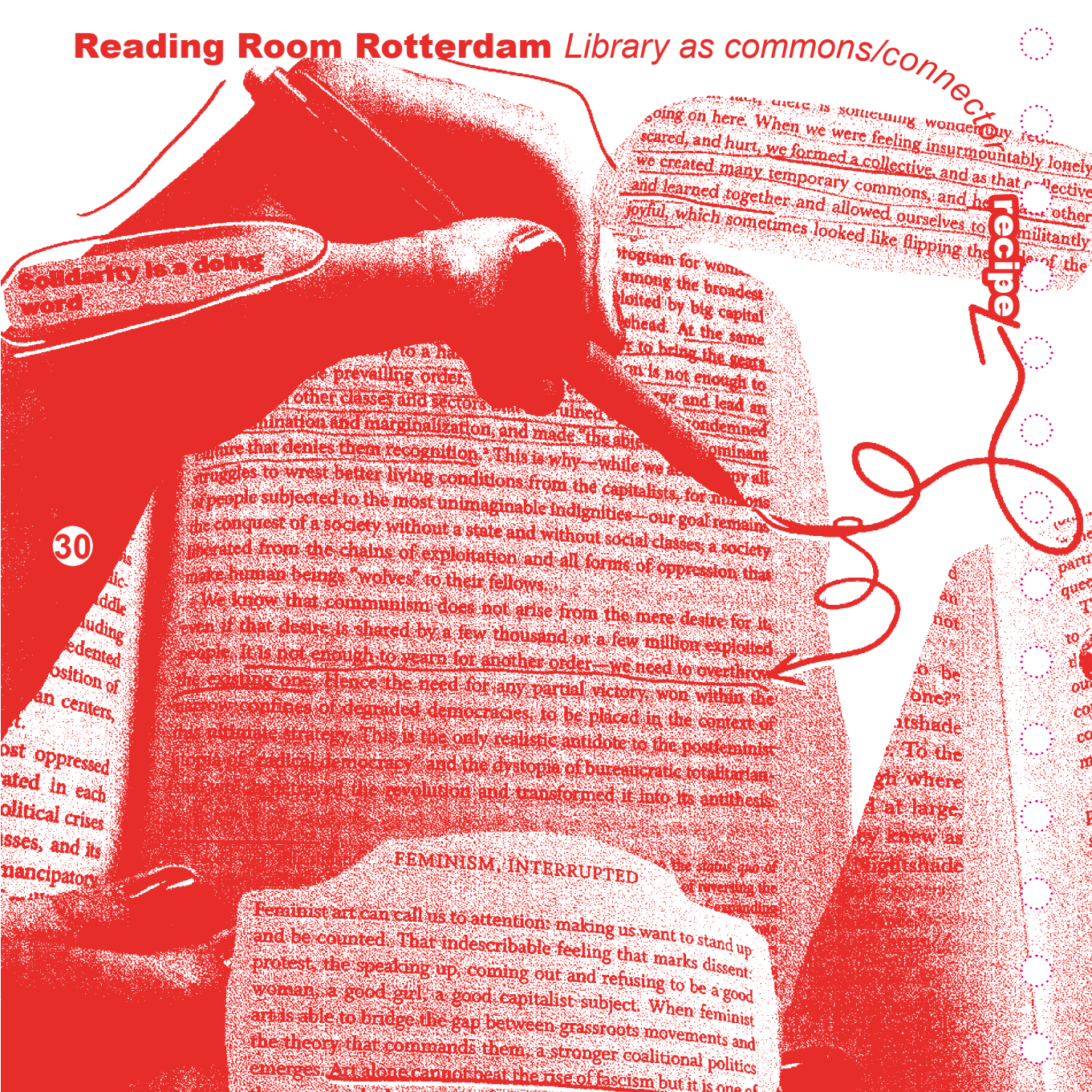
**Create a program that requires collaboration**
Create the need to talk and meet because the program demands it of us.

**Create Collective Time**
Build in time for process, organise a monthly tangle day, give employees hours to spend as a collective outside of daily activities. Ensure we check in with each other regularly.

**Embrace the unexpected**
When you open up processes to different creators and audiences you relinquish direction. That way, the entire program becomes a tryout. We embrace that things may turn out differently than anticipated or expected, and accept our mistakes.



# Reading Room Rotterdam *Library as commons/connector*



# cooking up collectivity

## self determination

Contributions by
SOUPSPOON Collective,
Florian Cramer, Katinka de Jonge,
Iconoclasistas

so happy together

# self determination

**Iconoclasistas**
What is autonomy?

**SOUPSPOON Collective**
Game Manual: A Recipe for a generative forum of ‘minor gestures’ and ‘micro politics'

**Florian Cramer**
What happens when autonomy is collectivised?

**Katinka de Jonge**
How to cook up collectivity

READING - RECYCLING - GIGS

READING and reading groups seem to have exploded in self-organised communities as a form of communal DIY self-study and self-education, and as a means of avoiding reinventing the wheel, by learning from previously written critiques and experiences. To depart from pre-existing, communal bodies of knowledge is in sharp contrast to the "not invented here" territorialism and "fake it till you make it" hyper-individualism that still characterizes and haunts Western art and design worlds. This means that RECYCLING and reusing anything is a virtue. This goes against the (still felt) originality imperative of modernist art. It also means that GIGS can be forms of characterises without resorting to the idea of the (even small, local or subcultural) art/music/performance star and his/her/their exceptionalism

recipe

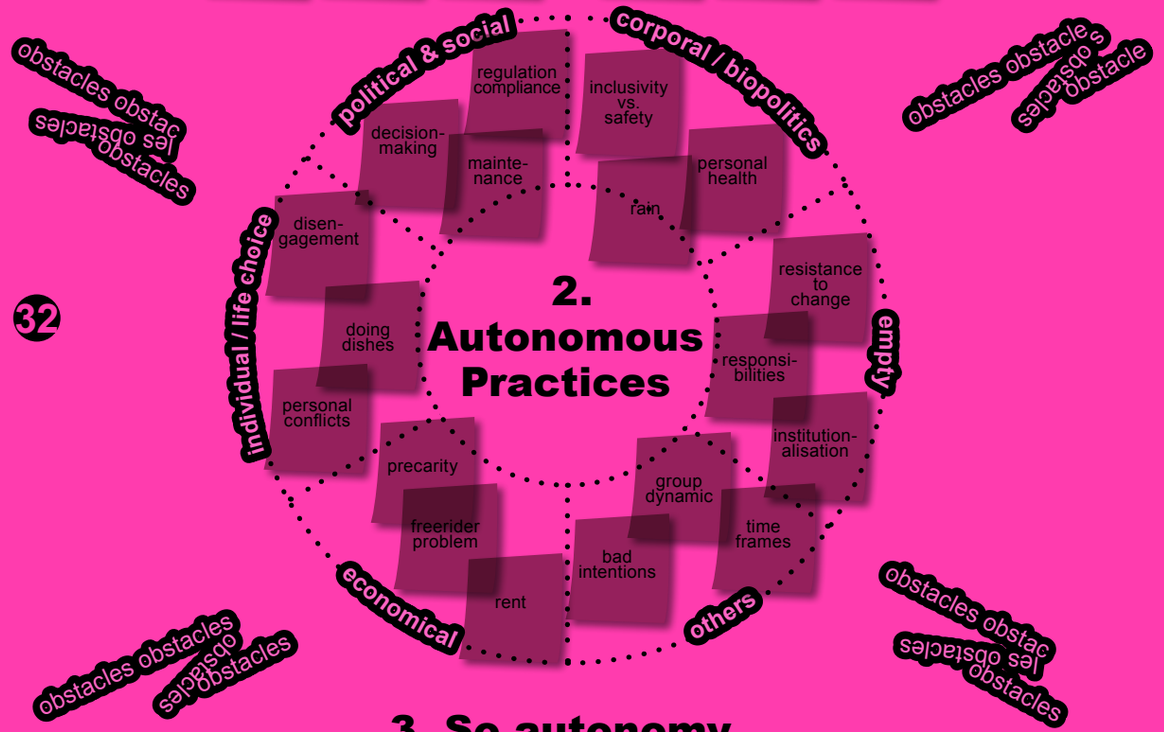
## 2. What is autonomy?

**Certainties**

- collabo-ration
- co-de-pend-ency
- bot-tom-up

**Uncertainties**

- restric-tions
- institu-tional support
- uncer-tain concepts





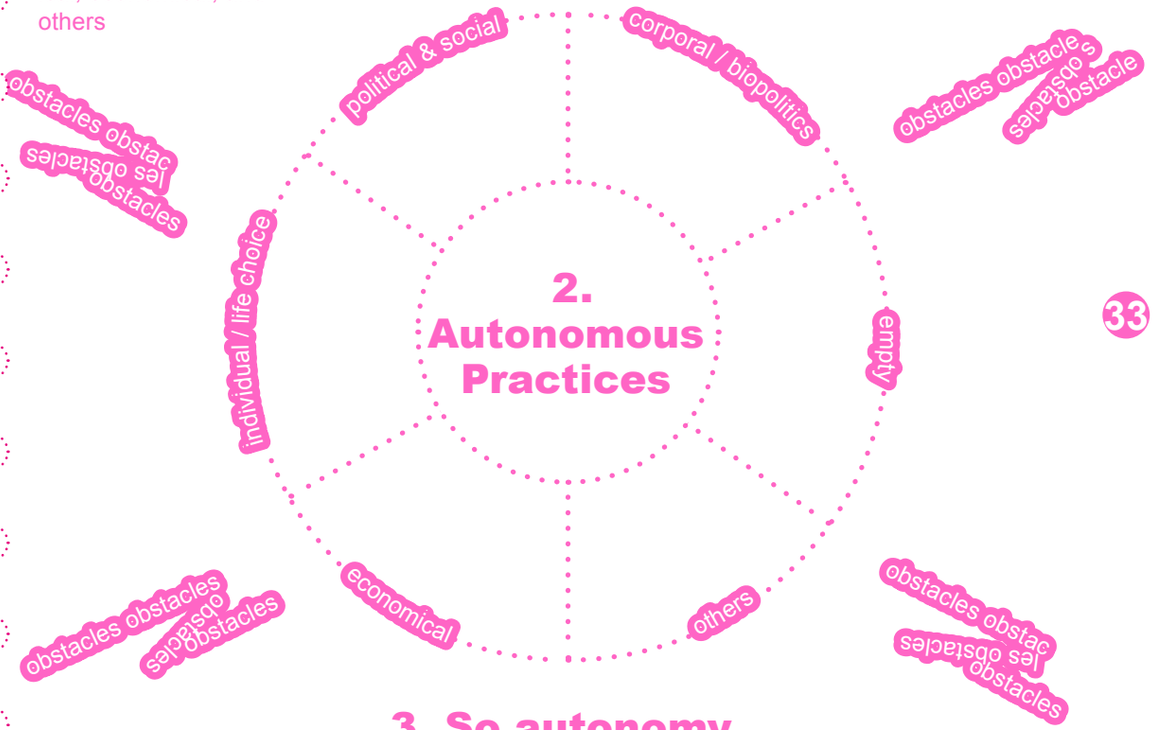

## 3. So autonomy...

| Where? | How? | With whom? | When? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Enter autonomous practices into circle 2 in the following segments: politics/ social, corporal/ biopolitics, individual / lifechoice, technological, economical, and others

## 2. What is autonomy?

| Certainties | Uncertainties |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |






## 3. So autonomy...

| Where? | How? | With whom? | When? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

recipe

# A recipe for a generative forum of 'minor gestures' and 'micro politics'

*Note: Before we jump into our recipe for a generative forum of minor gestures and micro politics, we'd like to give a shout-out to Non Native Native*, who generously invited us to an occasion that opened up a conversation around the conditions of self-organisation. Some of the ingredients below are the outcomes of the aforementioned collaborative effort.*

***NON NATIVE NATIVE (NNN)** is a cultural platform which looks into the Asian creative landscape in The Netherlands through the lens of the outsiders from within. The platform serves as an alternative point of exchange for critical creative practitioners between the Asian and Dutch cultural landscape with the focus on contemporary visual culture. The initiative was formed in late 2018, and through a series of research and public activities, we aim to combine the contemporary work of Asian creatives with the local diaspora narratives, bringing to the surface a nuanced representation of Asian visibility in popular culture. We aim to construct an alternative speculation – or rather – impression on the world's future, through critical reflection of Asian actors who are part of the global cultural landscape.

*Non Native Native is co-founded by designers and curators: Belle Phromchanya, Darunee Terdtoontaveedej, and Honey Kraiwee, and operates in collaboration with diverse professionals to celebrate the art of reclaiming the unclaimed*

Existing condiments already in your cupboard

Friendship / Shared responsibility and urgency / Emotional support (and damage) / Learning / Growth / A sense of belonging / An available ear to listen to each other / Shared skill sets

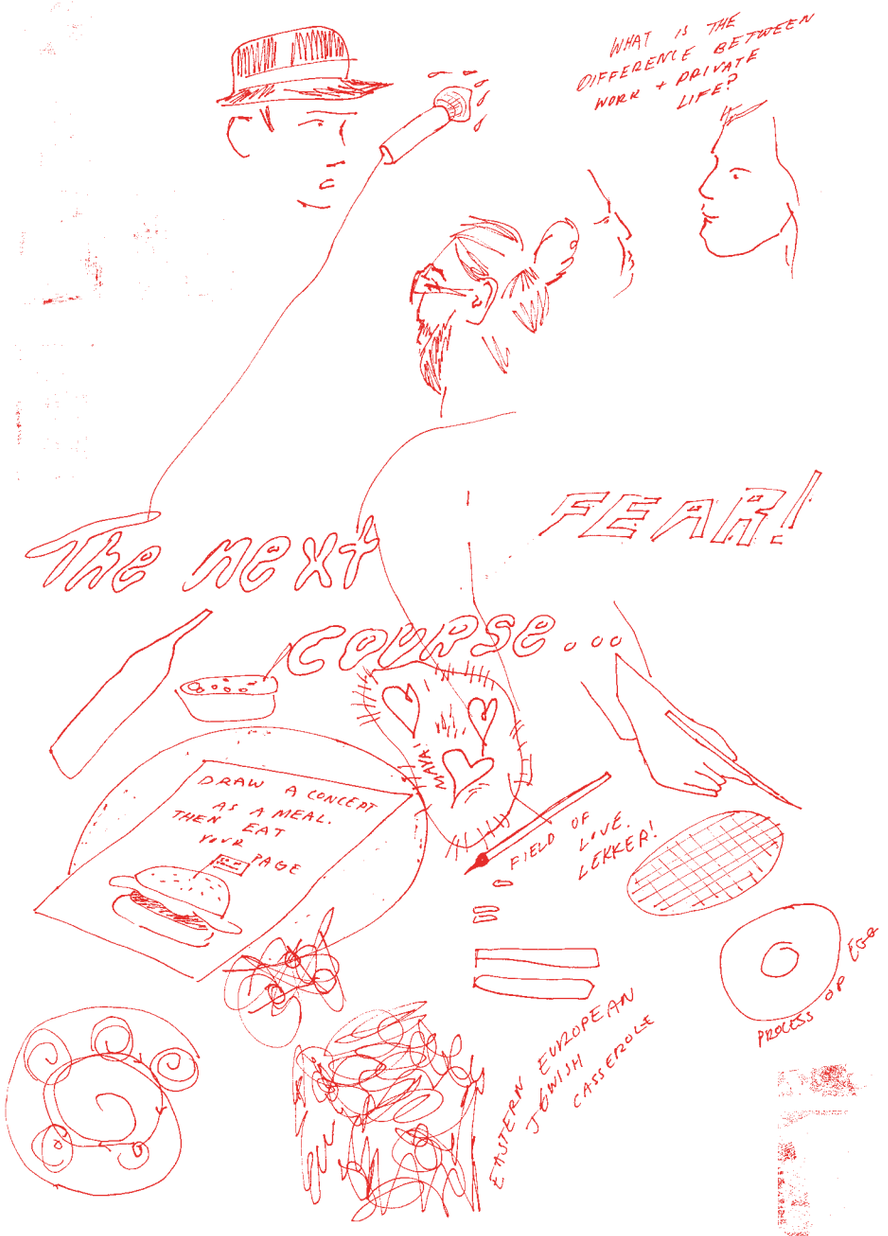
[Tasty stuff taking turns throwing themselves into the boiling broth]

♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨♨

*Below are listed elements of a heated-up cooking plate under a yuanyang pot* *The following rankings are not in particular order*

⏻FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT!⏻Budgeting ⏻Unpaid/underpaid labor⏻Invoices "Working" on friendship⏻Friendship while working (since "working" doesn't necessarily pay)⏻Admin ♨Emails Emails Emails♨WhatsApp WhatsApp Whatsapp♨Instagram Instagram Instagram♨ GOOGLE DOCS GOOGLE DOCS GOOGLE DOCS♨Scheduling shared calendar Revising a proposal♨What are we going to do with us the introverts?!!!!!! ⏻Playing along while bitterly resisting underlying tokenisation⏻




WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORK + PRIVATE LIFE?
THE NEXT
FEAR!
COURSE...
DRAW A CONCEPT AS A MEAL. THEN EAT IT!
FIELD OF LOVE. LEKKER!
EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH CASSEROLE
PROCESS OF

# What happens when autonomy is collectivised

by Florian Cramer

essay

## Mapping autonomy & self-organisation

In November 2023, the Argentinean duo Iconoclasistas, consisting of the social scientist Julia Risler and the graphic artist Pablo Ares, led a group of about forty teachers and students of the Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam as well as visitors of Roodkapje to produce, over the course of an entire working day, a communal 'counter-mapping' of autonomous and self-organised practices. Based on the combined experiences of the participants – which included various forms of work in self-organised collectives – the resulting map identifies types of autonomy ('biopolitical', 'technological', 'political and social', 'individual and life choice', 'economic'), certainties and uncertainties, obstacles (such as 'precarity,' 'pressure to make money,' 'inclusivity versus security,' 'freerider problem,' 'personal conflicts,'who does the dishes'), and questions (autonomy 'where,' 'for whom,' 'with whom,' 'why,' and 'when').

The map ended up as a condensed, yet still experimental and open-ended body of knowledge of today's self-organisers, consisting of questions and issues that future self-organisers are also likely to face. Its questions and issues are as applicable to an artist or designer collective as they are to a neighborhood committee, a research group, an activist initiative, or any other self-organising project, collective, or community.

The fact that the workshop participants had no difficulty agreeing on such a broad mapping and concept of autonomy suggests that something has shifted in how autonomy is understood and lived in today's art practices. While in recent years, the work of non-Western multidisciplinary artist collectives (organised in networks such as Arts Collaboratory and prominently involved in events such as the Jakarta Biennale 2015 and documenta fifteen 2022) has received more public attention, it seems that autonomy and self-organisation are understood and practiced in quite similar ways among younger generations of Western art practitioners.

On a broader scale, this means that the notions of autonomy and self-organisation that have long existed in various subcultures and in political activism have trickled down to – at least some – artist communities and replaced traditional Western concepts of autonomy in relation to the arts. At the same time, they have become politically problematic: as neoliberal recipes for compensating for cuts in public welfare, shifting responsibility to the private initiative of citizens; as libertarian ideologies of cryptocurrencies and seasteading (= zero-tax settlements in high sea areas outside national jurisdictions); or as extreme-right "sovereign citizens" communities.

## What we broke with

But what are the traditional concepts of autonomy? In the post-18th-century Western art system, 'autonomy' conflates aesthetic autonomy (the fact that an object or piece of nature can be perceived as beautiful, sublime, or otherwise, without viewing it from a utilitarian perspective; first defined by Kant as "disinterested pleasure"), art for its own sake (as opposed to politically or socially engaged art), 'free' art versus 'applied' art (or fine art versus design), freedom of art and expression in general (versus censorship), art as free individualistic expression (versus conventionality caused by conformity pressures),[1] also as open-ended experimentation in a systems theory view. It could be argued that 'autonomy' in Western art thus stands for a politics ex negativo.[2]

This is at odds with the meaning of 'autonomy' in politics, where it stands for active struggles for self-determination: of populations, as in decolonial and separatist activism; in struggles for statehood for stateless populations such as Kurds, Palestinians, and Taiwanese; or in struggles for self-determination over specific areas of life, as in squatter housing activism and feminist struggles for abortion rights. Art that would actively promote and participate in such struggles would traditionally be considered non- or even anti-autonomous, unless one considers the romanticist concept of autonomy in art as part of an emancipation struggle of artists.[3]

[1] For all these definitions, see also (Osborne, Peter. The Postconceptual Condition: Critical Essays. Verso Books, 2018, pp. 64-67).

[2] This is even the case in Adorno's aesthetic theory, which – within a larger Marxist discourse – tried to dialectically rescue or extend the lifeline of the concept of autonomous art against classical Marxists who insisted that art serves a social and political function and can therefore not be autonomous (aside from aesthetic autonomy being a bourgeois illusion from a materialist perspective). In other words, Adorno dialectically transubstantiated late – romanticist l'art pour l'art – suited to his own aesthetic preferences for dodecaphonic classical music and symbolist poetry – into political art by declaring its anti-politics an act of resistance against capitalist mass culture and commodification. This argument amounts to political conservatism dressed up in Marxist terminology. It also became a recipe for post-conceptual white cube contemporary art existing in close vicinity to critical theory.

[3] "What is supposed to be the 'autonomy' of art, its purposeless self-legislation, has therefore only existed seemingly: the 'autonomy' of art has always been more of an invocation than a fact – especially where its 'freedom from heteronomous constraints has been emphatically emphasised." – my translation of Bredekamp, Horst. "Autonomie und Askese. – Autonomie der Kunst: Zur Genese und Kritik einer bürgerlichen Kategorie. edited by Michael Müller. Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972, p. 92.

## What next?

What remains outside the picture of negative-political autonomy in the arts is a core question of political struggles for autonomy: autonomy for whom, and from what? Especially when this 'who' is not the artist(s) themselves, but a larger group of people. How does art change when it creates autonomy for others, not just for itself? Why is 'art' still needed as a specific concept and practice?

Ironically, 'autonomy' – in its traditional Western, romanticist-modernist, negative-political meaning – is still the criterion that secures the status of Western art and prevents its disappearance into other forms of social and economic work (including that of the creative industries or, in the case of much social art and design, social work, the hospitality industry, etc.). Or, to put it differently and in a more contemporary language, 'art' today is a privileged position that gives a higher value to activities carried out under its name than to those labeled otherwise, even if they are (superficially or not) identical. 'Autonomy' is the distinguishing feature of this privilege.

To illustrate this with an example, a social art project is usually considered art and not just run-of-the-mill social work, or a food art project is different from ordinary catering if it has at least some of the previously listed types of autonomy, such as being non-utilitarian, based on free expression, and done as an open-ended experiment, or, realistically, just by

taking place in an art scene. All this applies to Roodkapje's community workshop program documented in this book. But that's privilege on a shoestring. It manifests itself mostly in the (low-budget) public art funding of the space and the program. One day, this remaining privilege may disappear completely, thanks to the simultaneous effects of the democratisation of art practice and the political questioning of the (ontological) status of art, by artists themselves, but also by populist governments. In the larger, non-Western parts of the world, the arts are not a privileged practice or space to begin with.

To date, non-white cube, self-organised, collective, multidisciplinary practice – which often takes place as community events and can take forms as diverse as cooking and self-organised libraries – has mostly been seen as a development within the arts, raising questions about how art should be understood, taught, and presented in the future. But perhaps the larger question (and one that was already virulent in the self-organised artist movements of the 20th century, including Dada, Russian productivism, Fluxus, and the Situationist International) is whether 'art' as a category and system should be sustained at all.

essay

by Katinka de Jonge

# How to cook up Collectivity

A possible recipe (translated by Florian Cramer)

1. Last year I travelled almost every week from Brussels to Rotterdam to learn about an organisation that wished to become a collective. They asked me to guide them in this process, and provide them with advice and support where problems arose. The organisation has existed for almost twenty years, and originated in Rotterdam's underground scene, from a barbershop that had ambitions of becoming a concert venue. The original nature of the organisation was that of a group of people who wanted to organise a different kind of togetherness, and saw hairdressing and listening to live music as a business model that did not yet exist. Later, in addition to musicians, visual artists became involved through one-year residencies, and a small restaurant was established to function as an additional source of income. It became a success, leaving the collective spirit to become somewhat lost over the years due to growth, professionalisation and institutionalisation of the space, which happens with so many small initiatives. So I was puzzled by the question posed: can we reverse this movement, and recover something of our commonality? Can we learn to work as a collective? What would it take to do that? It sounds utopian, and the fact that the organisation is called Roodkapje ("Little Red Riding Hood") underscores the somewhat fairy-tale nature of their request.

2. Nevertheless, my imagination was sparked, and during my first meetings at Roodkapje, I became struck by how informal and decisive the organisation was (and remains). The mentality of the staff is reminiscent of that of a catering team tasked with running a restaurant. Everyone has both feet on the ground and is direct and well attuned to each other. There is quick action, half a word is often enough. Soon I noticed that the hurriedness of the conversations is also reflected in the hurriedness of the daily business. Roodkapje is a place of improvisation, where all sorts of things are happening in the same space on the same day, yet each time with different people involved. The scenography of the space is constantly being built up and broken down. Every few hours it's time for the next "change of scene," where the set, props, and extras change completely.

3. Along the way, I have several formal and informal conversations with artists who have been involved, as well as with personnel and the director, the self-proclaimed 'wolf' in the Little Red Riding Hood story. I moderate those moments, using tools (especially to induce a slowdown, such as writing instead of speaking, drawing together, introducing certain conversation structures) to pull

people somewhat out of their habitual roles; trying to fiddle a bit with the structure of the organisation in order to create space to question taken-for-granted assumptions. Together with Simon Kentgens, we also began to organise a public program (So Happy Together) in which external collectives are brought in to share their knowledge, and create encounters between the organisation and the public.

4. It proves difficult to truly change anything. It is chaotic to coordinate talks, the staff and resident artists do not have enough time to actually turn into actions the things they say during their talks. It also proves difficult to involve the personnel in the public program. The external collectives we invite only share their work with an external audience, disconnected from the organisation's staff. At the same time, internal tensions arise between the resident artists and Roodkapje staff members. The former experience their residencies as far too heavily scheduled, with too little time off in which to produce their individual work. It is suggested from the residents to allow more unstructured time in their residency track.

But the question remains if that is what is needed within Roodkapje, and I'm reminded of Jo Freeman's text *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*, in which she writes about groups where there is supposedly no structure, but where there does appear to be an implicit structure, just not named (we'll come back to this later). The Roodkapje staff, in turn, find themselves with the hot breath of funding bodies down their necks, thinking: we promised to explore collectivity, but also to achieve a certain audience reach, and now we must deliver. In taking a closer look at these frustrations, I notice that both parties are actually caught in the same rushed logic of constantly producing, leaving no time to actually allow some form of collectivity.

5. In my research on artist-run organisations and other collaborations, I found that some groups call themselves a collective, but don't actually function as such. For example, they are more of a support structure that facilitates individual art practices or a shared workspace. Conversely, art organisations that do not call themselves a collective at all, can have moments of great openness and collaboration that are very close to the collective grasp of that organisation. I am beginning to realise that the notion of collectivity in my research is not necessarily consistent with how it is used by different groups, and that within my own framework it is more workable as a practice than as a fixed identity. Collectivity is something we do, not necessarily something we are. And as a consequence: we are a collective when we act as a collective. The question then becomes rather process-oriented: can we practise collectivity, and, if so, what do we need to do so?

This way of dealing with collectivity strongly leans toward what performance *theory describes as embodiment.*[1] By practising collectivity, we get a sense of the meaning of a concept, and it moves from theoretical discourse into our bodies, as it were.

[1] Embodiment is a cross-disciplinary concept used in the arts by makers engaged in somatic practices, as well as by anthropologists, psychologists, philosophers, and activists (Gabor Maté, Bessel van der Kolk, and Rae Jonson, among others). Embodiment studies the subjective aspect of the body. The body is viewed not as an object, but as a "who we are". In this theory, body and mind are closely linked. Some authors go quite far in this, such as Amanda Blake. She says "Your body is your brain." The body affects emotions, cognition, behaviour, personality, and regulation. In the arts, the term is used in dance and theatre (e.g. Ruth Zaporah's Action Theater), but also visual arts (whether or not linked to education and forms of therapy, e.g. Lygia Clark). A note to make here is that this is a term rooted in Western Enlightenment thinking, as the "body" and the "mind" (in Cartesian thinking) were separated, it became necessary to create a term to describe the relationship between the two and link them back together (for this, see the text: The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock).

It becomes part of our actions, part of our daily routine. Theories around embodiment problematise the distinction between body and thinking: our thoughts and language shape how we feel, and our culture determines how we express it, so there is a constant interchange between abstract concepts and bodily experiences. Further along this line of thought, the question then becomes: how can we embody collectivity? How can we act collectively, feel as a collective, experience a collective moment? What are the requirements for this?

6. **What Time?**
Back to Roodkapje.
During one of the conversations with the organisation, the question comes up: what does collective time mean in contrast to Roodkapje's institutional time? Institutional time is monetised time, someone says. It is productivity, there are people on the payroll, and work is done in the context of deadlines and projects. Haste is normal. Doing things more slowly is seen as laziness. In its early days, nobody at Roodkapje was paid, which often blurred the lines between having fun and working. A parallel is drawn with collectives: in those collectives, there is also communal unpaid time, which is actually necessary for the collective to function. But this should not be confused with how companies use 'play time' to make their employees perform better. It should literally be free time, time not used to recover from work or to do other (unpaid) work such as maintenance tasks. There is also a comment about fair pay, fair practice, isn't that something that gets in the way of this 'hanging-out time'? How can we consider fair pay while ensuring that a group also checks in with each other outside of this paid time? "The real plans are often made when everyone goes to a bar", says one person, or "at the coffee machine, during break time", says another.

Collective time, on the contrary, is characterised by a degree of unpredictability, being in the moment, not having a preconceived plan or deliberately deviating from the plan. Whereas institutional time is created within the institutional framework, collective time is where this framework is called into question and reflected upon together. When you ask existing collectives when they feel most like a collective, they mention moments of thinking and acting together and coming up with unique ideas: the group is more than the sum of its individual members; a collective voice emerges. It reminds of Helio Oiticica's idea of "creleisure". Creleisure is brought up by him

and Lygia Clark[2] in 1969 within an unpublished text: *The Senses Pointing Towards A New Transformation*, as an attempt to bring art and everyday life closer together: "Creleisure is the non-repressive leisure, opposed to diverted oppressive leisure thinking: a new unconditioned way to battle oppressive systematic ways of life. Its practice, open-practice, is a way of taking hold of a process, a sympathetic creative process, where sense-apprehension is body-apprehension which generates behaviour-action, in a total organic process."

[2] Lygia Clark is interesting to explore further because in her art practice she focuses on the sensory experience rather than the understanding that the object is always relational to the viewer (participant). She also attributes this to a form of embodiment: "Besides the fact that Clark created fascinating objects (...) [They] do not get their full sense on their own but instead depend on the participant's embodiments, because they intend to access a bodily memory through pre-verbal and non-verbal experience."



What I find so compelling about this term is that it is about a way of spending time that is not productive, but also differs from leisure time as it is framed in the Western world. It is (as Oiticica also explains later in his text) an intrinsically revolutionary term, a new way of spending time that is certainly creative but also problematises the art object as an expression of this creativity.

In this, the work of art is something along the lines of:

*"an internal-growing proposing experience: proposing to propose.*

And in doing so, spending creleisure-time is something along the lines of

*"from person to person, a corpora; improvised dialogue which can spread out into a whole chain creating a kind of biological ensemble or what I would call a crepractice. (...) establish a really growing communication on an open level. (...) No corrupted, interested 'profit' should be expected—the remarks of 'it's nothing' or 'what's the point,' etc., will pour out; (...)*

It is, in other words, a proposal for a different behaviour, of a different way of being together. A different way of spending time, not production, not consumption, but time to be creative, to be in the moment, away from a project logic

An important note to make here is that this form of spending time can only occur if basic needs are met, and everyone is sufficiently rested, fed, cared for, and feeling safe, which is not self-evident. This has to do with an increased (attention to) precarity, both of the participants in this time occupation and of the organisation as a whole. Stress is a creeping indicator of precarity. We become accustomed to uncertainty and constant alertness, which seems to greatly hamper the idea of creleisure. How can we organise ourselves in such a way that we can (at least temporarily) overcome this?

7. **What Space?**

If we can think about (the prerequisites of) collective time, we can also look at collective space. Which spaces lend themselves to the creation of collective moments, and what requirements must such a space meet? Thinking back to the public moments of So Happy Together, the layout of the space played an important role as each invited collective was asked how they wanted to design the space. In the preparations of the space these collectives got to know each other. Because of the concrete request to do something together, we deliberately chose not to spend too much time talking about what we would do. Several things turned out to be important for creating a collective space, for example: introducing furniture that could also become something else: wooden blocks that can function as benches, but stacked on top of each other turn into a table, and upright serve as standing tables. Carpets to sit, stand, and lie on, with the visitors deciding how to use and relate to these objects. Nothing should be too determinant of the arrangement of bodies in the space, so a conference table with chairs around it was out of the question.[3]

[3] While that table with chairs around it seems to be the tacit trademark of the institutional space, preferably with a whiteboard or projection screen next to it. How do we get rid of that table?

*The Nautonomat Operation Manual* by Raqs Media Collective is a text that keeps returning as an opening to think about a group's use of space, and what hosting means. In this text, the collective describes what is needed in a space to facilitate a collective conversation:

*"A nautonomat is a craft of autonomy. It is a vehicle, a scenario, a loose, changing, evolving protocol of doing things together and sharing time, ideas and testing a few visions whenever necessary. (...) The nautonomat piloted by nautonomonauts is itinerant and can 'pop up' in different spaces,[4] and occupy different lengths of time in concordance with the increasingly mobile working lives of people in the arts, and their friends. (…)"*

[4] Although I do not entirely agree with the focus on the "pop up" especially since I often learn from collectives how important it is to have a settled space, as a temporary nature within this, but again you wonder if that is the right way to engage with that space? Of course, the Nautonomat can still be of value to relate to as a group.

They also clearly state what the Nautonomat should not be:

*"[...] the spatial echoes of a boardroom, a hotel or airport lounge, an office, a classroom or a doctor's waiting room. These are spaces that kill thought before it can even germinate. Remember, also, that the nautonomat is neither a studio nor a gallery. If anything, it is more like an orbiting clubhouse or a common room, a space for conversation, repose, experiment, disagreement, observation, reflection, play, sleep and joy."*



Again, this text praises objects that do not yet have a specific form, such as tools (paper, pens, string, clay) and natural objects (wood, stones, wool ["things to hold, weigh and consider"]), and it discourages working with recognisable figures or *icons, such as images* of celebrities, stuffed animals, matryoshkas or other dolls.

In relation to the space for collectivity, the Nautonomat is primarily a space to encourage a shared imagination, also called by them "the rediscovery of conversation

and collective learning as an art form". Objects with an overly defined form obstruct this imagination.

8. **Connecting The Dots**
Beyond the two artists-texts that unfolded their thoughts on the necessary conditions for shared time and space, I noticed during this year at Roodkapje that two other ingredients are needed to make collectivity possible. The first ingredient is a common goal, or a common project on which to work. Although that project can also be intrinsic purposelessness, or the goal as endurance: simply staying in existence. Moreover, collectives often arise out of a shared need: not having the right papers and assisting each other in that, not having access to good workspaces and opening a shared workspace, a common social purpose, etc.

Someone from one of the collectives I work with compared it to a ball. You need a ball as a group, that's the game – kicking that ball, getting it somewhere. If you take that ball out of the game, things quickly become personal and the group loses focus, and eventually falls apart. A ball is something that is shared: this can be an art form, an artistic practice, but also a common enemy or a common love. Who or what is Roodkapje's ball? Is it their common projects? Is it the work being produced? Or is Roodkapje's ball rather to keep playing? To keep going? How can we get the ball to be more at the centre of our attention? You'll notice that this particular ingredient is related to the productivity mentioned before. Perhaps Roodkapje has too many balls rolling around, and it is necessary to focus a little less on the common projects, but more on the common structure? The rules with which the game is played?

That brings us to the last crucial ingredient, which seems to connect all the conditions mentioned so far. Just as a new time must be invented, and the objects in space need to be both one thing and another, in order to allow for collectivity, there must be some form of transgression. Literally the possibility of questioning, transgressing, and redefining prior (named or unnamed) boundaries. This also relates to another concept floating around Roodkapje: porosity. Projects, moments, and interpersonal relationships are porous in a collective moment, in the sense that there is room for others to enter and change form through them; that there is room for growth, depth, and influence.

In the context of collectivity, transgression and porosity are connected with each other, because transgression is about the right to decide on one's own preconditions, in other words, to co-decide on the rules of the game, porosity is needed to allow this transgression. If everything is rigidly defined, there is no room for transgression, and collectivity will disappear as well.

But this is also where the aforementioned *Tyranny of Structurelessness* resurfaces. A structure must be present in a group for it to be questioned and changed. There is no 'unstructured group', only groups with more or less spelled-out structure. The more implicit the structure is in a group, the greater the risk of hidden power, called "elite formation" by Freeman. And this dynamic also makes collectivity inherently political; it is about power, decision-making, responsibility, and agency.

9. These ingredients are, of course, neither complete nor unambiguous. As with any recipe, there is room for improvisation and adjusting the portions to one's own taste. It is up to the group itself to decide how collectivity is ultimately cooked. My only advice would be not to let the pot simmer on the stove for too long.

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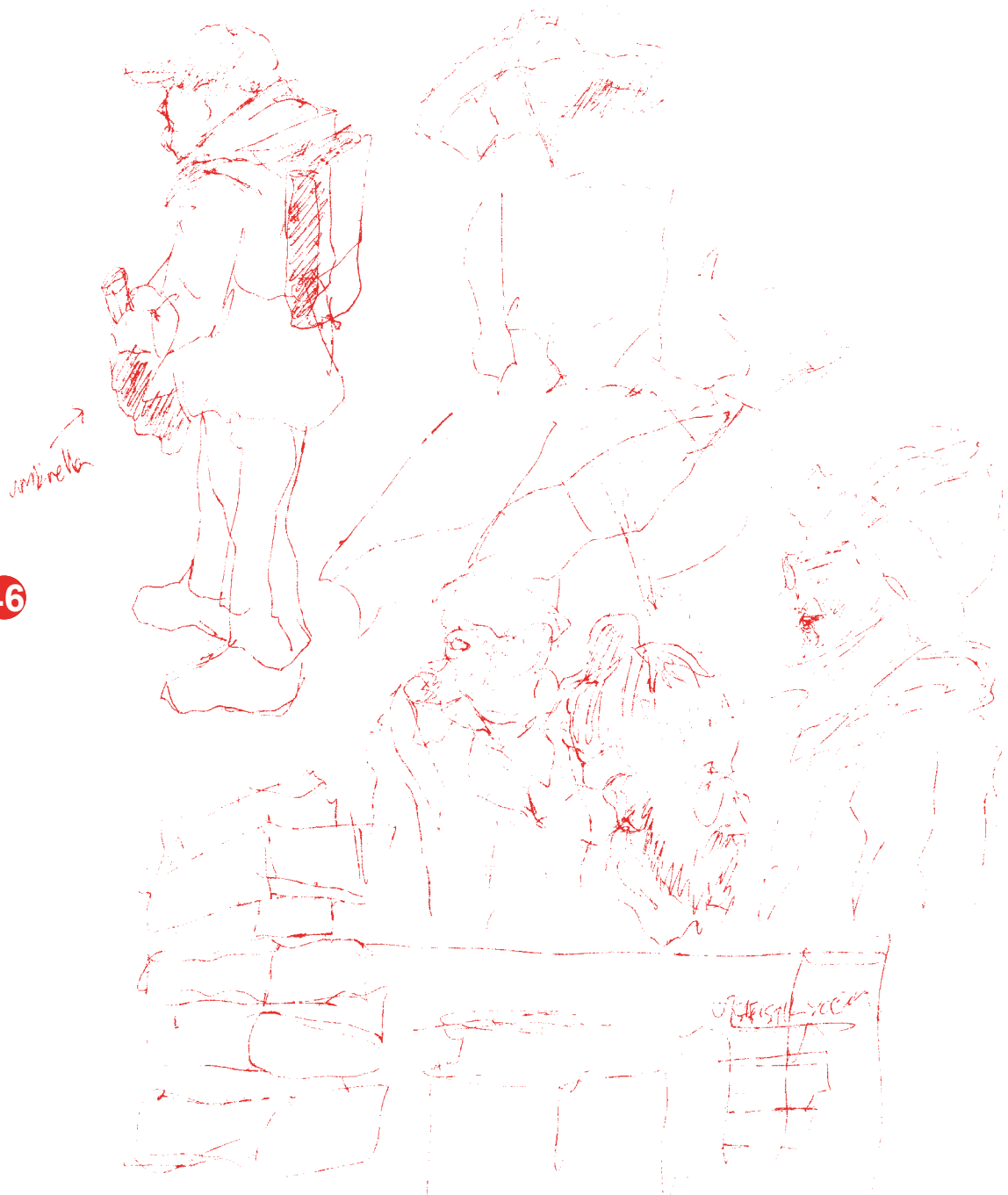

umbrella

# cooking up collectivity

## citizenship

Contributions by
One Field Fallow, KraakSpreekUur,
Simon Kentgens

so happy together

# citizenship

**One Field Fallow**
Manifesto

**KraakSpreekUur /**
**Squatting Info Hour**
How to squat in brief

**Simon Kentgens**
Imagine me and you, I do

BURGER - HAMBURGER - BURGERTRUT - SQUATTING - POLITICS

Roodkapje emerged in the early 2000s from a SQUATTING past. In naming the different parts of the organisation, they wanted to link the artistic operation with the BURGER restaurant that contributes financially to that artistic operation. The restaurant was called 'BURGERTRUT', and 'Hamburger Community' became the name for the one-year residency programme. Roodkapje's philosophy plays with the double meaning of BURGER, which in Dutch means both HAMBURGER and civilian. What does it mean to be an active citizen? In what way do POLITICAL dimensions become part of this? And perhaps most important of all: as an organisation, how do you also do/ what you say you are going to do?

# One Field Fallow *Manifesto*

one field fallow is a new socio-cultural project in Brussels located in a disused night shop. its worker ants divide themselves into three groups:

**permaculture**
a neighbourhood laboratory for young and old folks from surrounding anthills

**compost**
a place for collective social-artistic research that celebrates collaborative creation. think: work-shops, film screenings, book clubs, poetry nights, crafty afternoons.

**beehive**
a shared space for collectives with wonderful ideas but no place to bring them into blossom



these working groups flow side by side. how-ever, the type of involvement of a given worker ant within a working group rotates...

**sowing**
preparing the upcoming season of the working group and taking care of administrative work. this includes finances, and applying for subsidies

**harvesting**
bringing the plans of the working group into reality and maintaining the space

**fallowing**
resting and making space for new ideas within themselves and within the working group.

**recipe**

each month, the worker ants of OFF gather for a transfer meeting. during these meetings, the ants share what they've been doing in their field over the past month and what still needs to be done. each ant expresses their preference for which field they would like to work in next month. an ant can stay in the same field for a maximum of three months. although if the working groups request longer-term engagement, ants can still rotate within them.

…to integrate...

...rest

...rewilding and new energy in its work

...OFF follows the logic of agricultural cycles.

**HARVESTING**

**ROTATING**

**HARVESTING**

**EVERY 1-3**

**MONTHS**

**HARVESTING**

Compost
Permaculture
Beehive
Fields

**SOWING**

**SOWING**
Compost
Permaculture
Beehive

**SOWING**



**FALLOWING**
Compost
Permaculture
Working groups
Long term engagement
Beehive

**FALLOWING**

**FALLOWING**

# Squatting Info Hour *How to squat in brief*

recipe

Where empty buildings coexist with housing shortages, squatting is a good solution. In short, the right to housing trumps the right to leave buildings uninhabited. It takes some effort and determination, but in return you get to take matters into your own hands. You might even save some money and time, or meet the right people to collaborate with on the things you actually care about.

By inhabiting a building and taking photographic evidence of your domestic activities, you can prove that you live there ('house peace'). Take recognisable photos of the open front door with the house number as well as views from inside, particularly of recognisable points (buildings across the street, trees, etc.) and photos of domestic activities in the location (cooking, cleaning, using the crapper, etc). Post the photos on a photo-sharing site that includes the upload date, such as Instagram. After around two days get into contact with the police and the owner to let them know of your 'house peace'. Bring printouts of your squatting letter, your photographic evidence, and the relevant Dutch Supreme Court ruling (staatscourant nr. 19500) to show in case they visit the location.

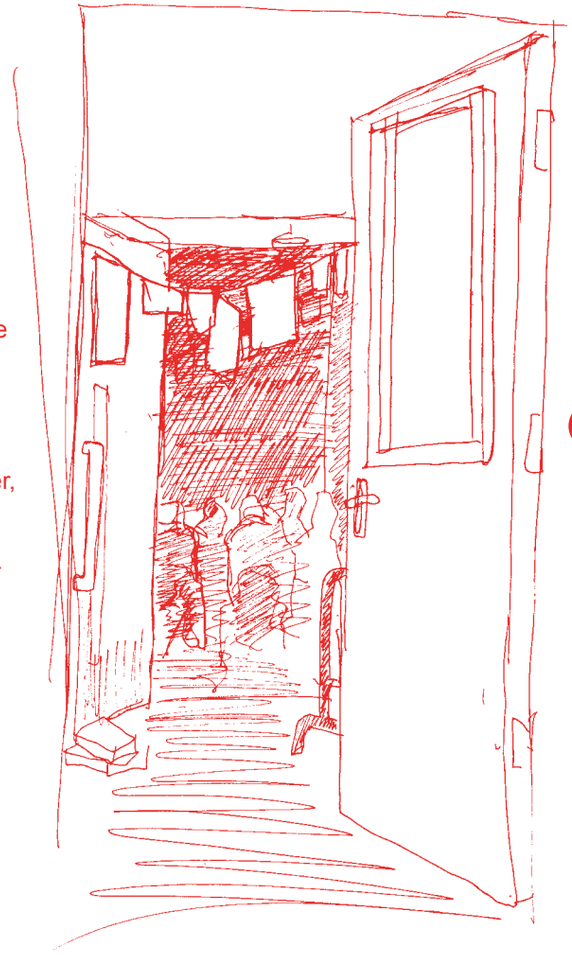
The Supreme Court ruling states that the police cannot evict you without a court order. In other words, without a judge ruling that the interests of the squatters do not outweigh the interests of the property owner.

Squatting was banned in 2010 but still functions as a gray area within the law. You are in the building illegally, but because you established house peace no one can enter the property without your permission. So, in principle, the police can only enter with a special warrant, which is usually difficult to get. But be beware, the police do not always obey the law.

If the owner wants to evict you, they must file a civil lawsuit and prove their plans in court.

**Step-by-Step Action Plan**

- Read the complete squatting manual on https://network23.org/ksurotterdam/home/
- Find a suitable building based on the function you want to use it for, the likelihood of being able to stay there for a while, and/or the activist goals you want to accomplish
- Find out who the owner is, how long it has been vacant, what their plans are, and what utilities are available
- Make sure the building is not in use by monitoring it for some time.
- Put together a group of people you want to open and/or share the property with
- Work out a division of labour during the squatting and afterwards.
- Gather inventory
- Discuss your plans with the KSU (KraakSpreekUur / Squatting Info Hour).
- Get inside
- Document domestic activities
- Close and lock the door, possibly block the windows, etc.
- Occupy!
- Maintain communication with police, owner, and neighbors according to your strategy
- LIVE THERE! And take care of each other



# Imagine me and you, I do

## by Simon Kentgens

essay

In the autumn of 2023, every Thursday evening at 6 pm, a sit-in takes place in the middle of Rotterdam Central Station. Each week, a few hundred people sit down on the cold floor of the central hall to peacefully demonstrate against the oppression of the Palestinian people and the violence experienced since October 7, 2023. The sit-in is one of many that take place every Thursday in major train stations across the country, all at the exact same hour. They are spontaneously organised and bring together people from very different backgrounds. They are not centrally managed, there is no leader or spokesperson, and they are open for anyone to join.



At the same time, and just a stone's throw away, a few hundred meters from the same Rotterdam Central Station, So Happy Together is unfolding, a program about collectivity in Roodkapje. So Happy Together is the title of a year-long investigation into how collective practices can be fostered and strengthened within the Roodkapje community. It consists of a regular schedule of weekly Thursday meetings with residents and staff that include conversations, exercises, and informal gatherings, as well as a public program of three open evenings, culminating in a Sympa-Symposium where invited collectives share their ways of working in participatory workshops.

Collectives often do not measure up well in terms of efficiency and productivity. Cooperation within collectives has its own dynamics; there is often no established hierarchy or decision-making structure. The functioning of collectives is closely related to the number of members, their general well-being, their physical, emotional, and mental states, and other circumstances. There is no blueprint for how collectives work, no one-size-fits-all way of functioning. The collectives involved in So Happy Together were invited to share their practices in order to provide insights and to learn about how they work and live together. Some collectives consist of a (more or less) fixed group of members, like SOUPSPOON collective or Questions Collective, others have an open structure that people can join, like Singing Club Rotterdam. Jatiwangi Art Factory is made up of a large group of people who form smaller groups within it, and so it is actually a collective of collectives. De Onkruidenier explores how we can live collectively with microbes and other more-than-human creatures. And Reading Room Rotterdam encourages collective reading and learning with(in) its nomadic library that pops up in locations around the city.

So Happy Together explores different forms of collectivity through a series of open workshops. The collectives take the audience through participatory sessions and share their practices with each other, with cooking and eating together as a way to create community at the very center. Echoing Roodkapje's core practice as both art space and hamburger restaurant (Burgertrut), the hamburger proves to be a somewhat unconventional yet fruitful starting point for exploring these collective practices. The hamburger is a stack of different ingredients that all combine to form a cohesive dish. In four public sessions we explored different aspects of collectivity. In three participatory workshop sessions, we dissected the hamburger into three parts: the bun, the burger, and the toppings; in the fourth session, we reassembled them into a collective hamburger. The bun – the foundation of the burger, is the starting point for working on the conditions of collectivity. What does it take to work collectively? How can you be hospitable? The second public session focuses on the citizen ('burger' in Dutch language), the core of the hamburger. How do we relate to each other in the collective? How can we break down implicit power structures? And how can we share the responsibility? In the third workshop, toppings are the starting point. Toppings give character to the burger. Who do we want to work with? How can we build communities with more than just humans, such as plants, microbes, or the ocean? Burgertrut chef Paul Smullenberg worked with the collectives to create new dishes that embodied their specific practice, such as a table covered with a variety of toppings that simply wouldn't fit on the tiny taco it was served with, mirroring Questions Collective's Motivational Club XL workshop on collective positioning and decision-making.

So what is the appeal of collectivity? The art world seems to have increasingly embraced the term in recent years. The current pinnacle is documenta fifteen, which took place in 2022 and was curated by the Indonesian collective ruangrupa, involving mostly other collectives, many of them from the so-called 'global south'. Collectivity seems to offer a way out of the capitalist, hyper-individualistic society based on growth and productivity. As such it is often presented as the answer and solution to the individualistic culture on which Western society is built that is plunging us into an ecological and socio-cultural abyss. This can be observed in the arts, but also in other fields. Collective entrepreneurship is 'in' and participatory projects are popping up everywhere. However, seeing collectivity as a 'solution' to individualism is a continuation of this capitalist system, because it is based on thinking in terms of opposites, just as terms like 'non-white' or 'non-western' still focus on the white, dominant West (by turning away from it). Collectivity as an answer to the deadlocked capitalist system suggests a quick fix, a form of solutionism that assumes the world can be socially engineered. But collectivism is not an answer, it is a way of working, a way that raises its own difficulties and questions, a way of working that has been less apparent in an art world that generally prefers end results over the processes that can lead to them. Working collectively raises other questions that the art world is less familiar with than, say, community initiatives or activist groups. Working in a collective requires a lot of communication, meetings, agreements, but also adapting and not putting one's own preferences first. Within seemingly horizontal social structures, power relations inevitably arise around gender, race, background, privilege, etc. In the early 1970s, for example, this was described within radical feminist groups in Jo Freeman's essay *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*. The (that term again) non-Western collectives we worked with in So Happy Together showed us that for them, collectivity is often not a choice at all. It is a way of supporting each other and surviving because there is a lack of infrastructure, and

there is therefore no other option. This collective way of working and living opens up possibilities, but it can also sometimes impose stifling peer pressure. Something referred to as ‘toxic collectivity’ in one of the workshops. While not ignoring these toxic consequences of collectivism, where the individual is silenced and oppressed, So Happy Together sought to explore a collectivity where diverse, different individualities can meet, respect each other, and find common ground.

Many of the collectives participating in So Happy Together work with agreements or alternative contracts to ensure that different perspectives are heard and understood, and to allow space for vulnerability. One Field Fallow works around their 'seven values', a list of points that convey core values within the collective, which they offer to all visitors of their space in Brussels and ask them to reflect on. SOUPSPOON Collective challenges a capitalist linear and instrumental understanding of time and transforms it into rules for playful collaboration. The Post Collective (TPC), a group of people without 'official' identity papers, work with the PAACT they created, the Paperless Art Alliance ContracT, an agreement they make with all the people and organisations they work with. This PAACT grew out of the fact that members of the TPC were being used as tokens within an institutional diversity agenda, or were being subjected to discrimination and racism, something the agreement does not prevent, but rather exposes. Members of the Jatiwangi art Factory (JaF) use agreements to work with members of diverse communities in the village of Jatiwangi in West Java, Indonesia. JaF works with local farmers, factory workers, school children, as well as politicians, the military, and environmental organisations.



JaF's Sambal Geprek (mixed sambal) is both a recipe for making chilli sauce and for JaF's way of working, in which finding common ground and mixing people and groups is an essential element.

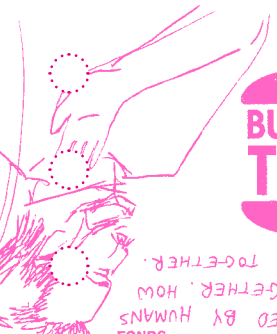
In the midst of the So Happy Together program, it became clear once again that our climates are changing rapidly on political, social, economic and ecological levels. How to self-organise and collectivise? The genocide in Gaza prompted Roodkapje to ask itself how to collectively position itself as an organisation. For example, with a public statement, or none at all, that would represent the entire organisation, not just those at the top of the payroll. Which raised the question: how much room is there for dissenting voices or vulnerability? Roodkapje is a small organisation whose size and culture is somewhere between a collective and an institution. What happens when collective art practices are being hosted by large institutions? Can existing institutional structures be truly hospitable to, and supportive of collective practices, or are entirely new types of institutions needed? How will collective practices develop in the near future, under the pressure of fascist geopolitics and planetary destruction? Will they become even more vulnerable, or will they be our mode of survival? And to what extent are collective practices dependent on institutional support? And will they be able to sustain themselves in even greater precarity once the funding ceases to exist?

So Happy Together?
And how is the weather?

The Post Collective

# BOOKJE

Hamburger
Community



BURGER
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FONDS
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KUNSTEN
PERFORMING
ARTS FUND NL

Gemeente
Rotterdam

mondriaan
fonds

Elise Mathilde

STICHTING
ONDERNEMERSBELANGEN
ROTTERDAM

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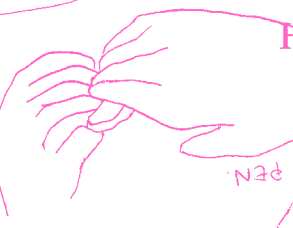
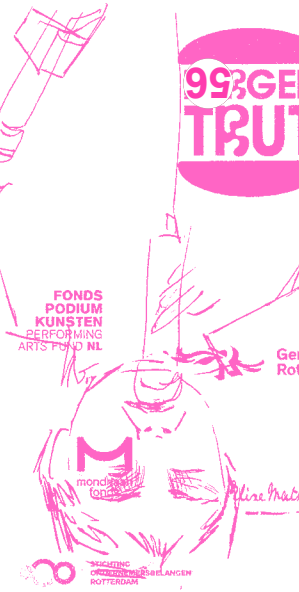
cultuurfonds

Volkskracht



# BOOKJE

Hamburger
Community



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PERFORMING
ARTS FUND NL

mondriaan
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cultuurfonds

Volkskracht

# cooking up collectivity

## food

Contributions by
Jatiwangi art Factory,
De Onkruidenier,
Paul Smullenberg

so happy together

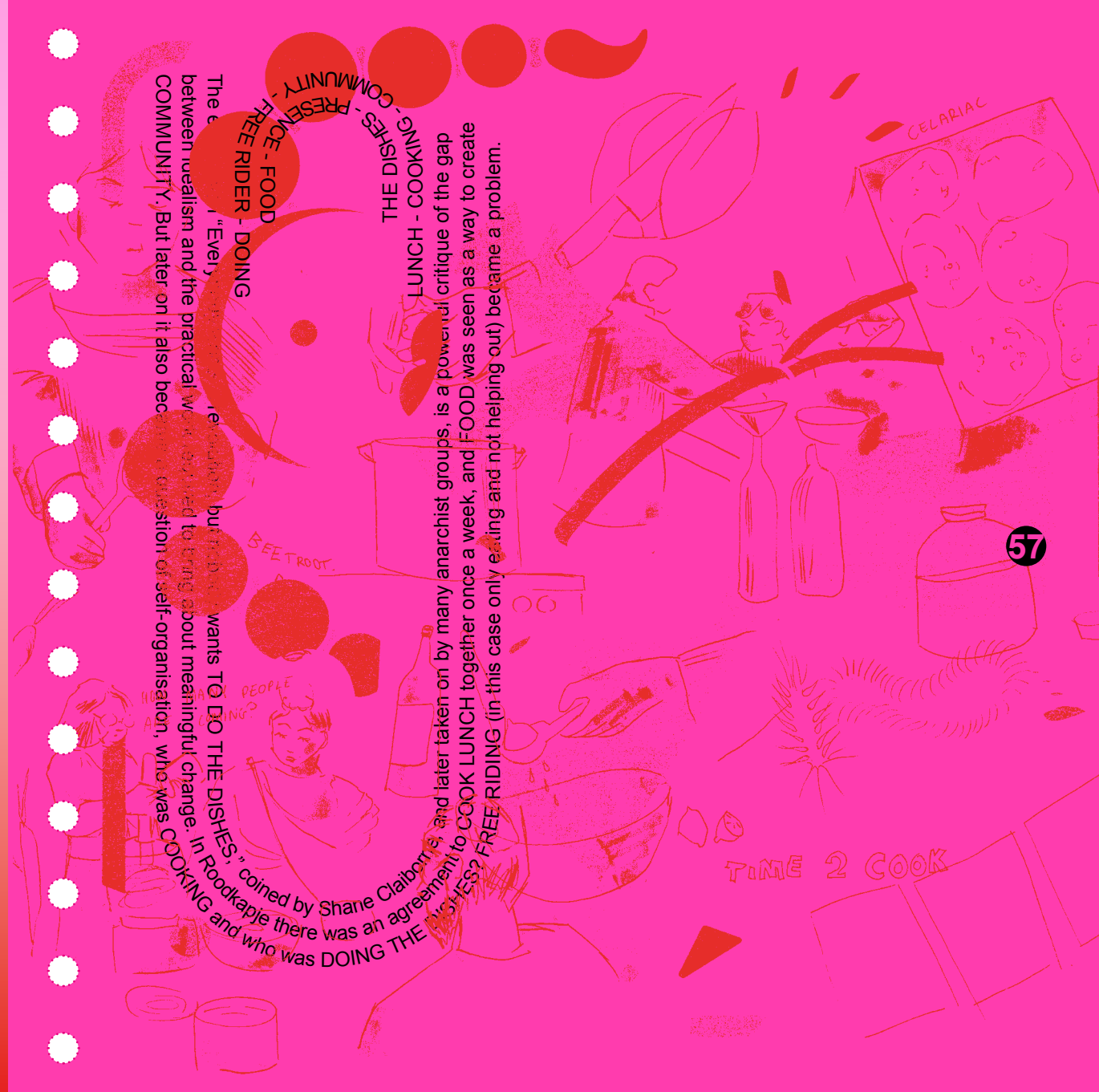
# food

**Jatiwangi art Factory**
Sambal Geprek Recipe

**De Onkruidenier**
Foam Encounters

**Paul Smullenberg**
Recipes

**Menus so Happy Together**




The e … "Every … but … wants TO DO THE DISHES," coined by Shane Claiborne, and later taken on by many anarchist groups, is a powerful critique of the gap between idealism and the practical w… to bring about meaningful change. In Roodkapje there was an agreement to COOK LUNCH together once a week, and FOOD was seen as a way to create COMMUNITY. But later on it also bec… question of self-organisation, who was COOKING and who was DOING THE DISHES? FREE RIDING (in this case only eating and not helping out) became a problem.

**Sambal Geprek**

5-10 Fresh chillis (usually super red and spicy chilli, but can replace with any kind of chilli based on your spice tolerance level)

- 3-5 cloves of garlic
- pinch of salt
- pinch of brown sugar
- 3-5 tablespoons cooking oil
- *Sambal friends serving suggestion:
  Fried chicken / tempeh
  tofu / egg / mushroom / etc.
- Warm rice

Smash all the ingredients together in pestle and mortar roughly, don't be too smooth. Heat the oil then immediately pour it on the chilli until the chilli is processed. Sambel Geprek is done!



While it's hot (warm), put the sambal friends like fried chicken; or you can replace with fried tempeh, tofu, egg, mushroom, or any vegetables to the mortar then smash them all. Serve with hot rice, and eat with a spoon. Enjoy...

**Kapsalon Geprek Brotherfood**

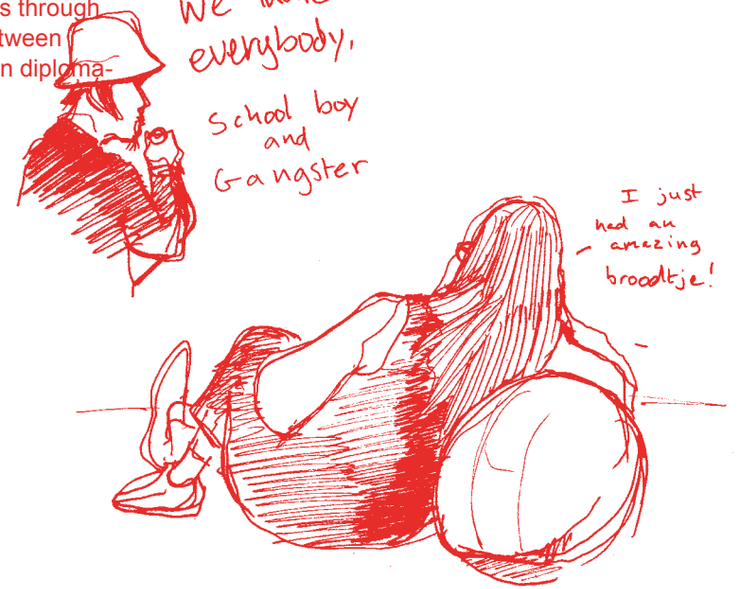
Various sources state that Sambal Geprek originated from the initiative of a woman who sold Fried Chicken in the Yogyakarta area around 2003. She smashed her Fried Chicken and added a Sambal (chili sauce) consisting of red chilli and garlic poured over it with hot oil. After that, Sambal Geprek gradually became more popular, and spread with all its developments and recipe experiments throughout Indonesia. Until early 2019, a multinational company famous for its "Indomie" product released the Ayam Geprek edition as one of its variants.

In Indonesia, we can see the cultural phenomenon of the spread of this "Geprek" symptom (Geprek literally means smashed). Unconsciously, this is one of the many lower-class cultural movements that not only influence today's popular culture; but even become a new culture based on community consensus. When I discussed this phenomenon with Simon Kentgens from Roodkapje in Rotterdam, he said that there was a similar phenomenon to Geprek in the Netherlands; known as the "Kapsalon" phenomenon.

Coincidentally, also in 2003, a hairdresser (Kapsalon) always ordered a variety of his favorite ingredients in one dish, consisting of layers of French fries, pieces of meat or shoarma, lettuce, and covered with gouda cheese, and baked until melted, then sprinkled with garlic sauce and chilli sauce. Because this hairdresser always ordered the same dish, other customers were interested in trying it and ordered it at the snack bar until it went viral and spread throughout the Netherlands

More or less, this methodology is often used by Jatiwangi art Factory, mainstreaming culture through various anatomies of society in the tendencies of each of their works. As respect and homage to these initiators, we initiated the brotherfood movement "Food as a language of unity". In collaboration with Roodkapje Rotterdam, we try to strengthen the paradiplomatic relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands through collaboration of community recipes; between Sambal Geprek and Kapsalon as citizen diplomacy within cultural food initiatives.





**"FOOD AS A LANGUAGE OF UNITY"**
**THE KAPSALON GEPREK BROTHERFOOD**

**MEMORANDUM *of* UNDERSTANDING**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the terms and understanding between Kapsalon as the representative of the Netherlands, and Sambal Geprek as the representative of Indonesia, consisting of;

Name : Arie Syarifuddin
Collective : Jatiwangi art Factory
Address : Jatiwangi. West Java. Indonesia
As the First Party; representative of SAMBAL GEPREK.

Name : Simon Kentgens
Collective : Roodkapje
Address : Rotterdam, the Netherlands
As the second party; representative of KAPSALON.

This MoU aims to:

Strengthen the paradiplomacy relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands through collaboration on community recipes; between Sambal Geprek and Kapsalon as citizen diplomacy in cultural food initiatives.

Explore opportunities for future cooperation, especially in efforts to increase healthy food security with balanced nutrition, as well as efforts to improve public health through culinary innovation.

Encourage the brotherfood movement "Food as a Language of Unity."

With great gratitude, we have made this MoU wholeheartedly from the consensus of both parties.

Friday, 1 March 2024,
Selamat Makan, Eet Smakelijk!

First Parties

Arie Syarifuddin
Indonesia

Second Parties

Simon Kentgens
the Netherlands





JATIWANGI ART-FACTORY

Singing Club Rotterdam

THAI BASIL FOAM

QUESTIONS, COLLECTIVE

Aubergine STEW

ONE FIELD FALLOW

ONION CHUTNEY

# De Onkruidenier *Foam Encounters*

recipe

*Explore new relationships between humans and non humans, plant and product, body and landscape.*

## FOAM

- Foam is delicate and volatile.
- Foam can be a fertiliser bringing new life to land.
- Foam can carry bacteria, seeds, and bring them into contact with soil or sand.
- Foam can contribute to creating new ecosystems.
- At the same time, foam can pose a serious threat to plants, animals and people. It multiplies rapidly, taking away oxygen, and appearing or disappearing as soon as the wind changes.
- Foam can be the bi-product of agricultural intensification, a direct indication of how our economy and ecology are intertwined.
- Foam moves through landscapes, connecting economic, social, and cultural systems.
- Foam is volatile and worthless on its own, but can it guide our attention towards new systems of value and currency?
- How is foam a shapeshifter between worlds and a multitude in itself?

Many bubbles make foam. Too much foam takes away oxygen from other species, so when does foam find ecological balance? How are the individual bubbles of foam connected, forming constellations so a stable collective foam will emerge, as a fertilizer for new life, for new ideas or projects – a composition of different components that together make a foam culture.



Can we see foam as a metaphor for connection, collectivity, and collaboration? Do these floating specks carry instructions?

1. **Instruction: How to make collective foam by building communities with human and more than human collaborators?**

Prepare for foamy encounters and insights by making beetroot kvass.

Beetroot kvass is a fermented salt and sugary drink connecting the sweet beetroot family with its salty origin. The beetroot family has been cultivated from a salty ancestor: the sea beet. Plants on the coastline often have silver colored, leathery, or hairy leaves to protect themselves against sun, wind, or salt. The seeds of these plants have been brought to land by foam and have settled on the coastline. They are able to adapt to the challenging circumstances of the sea or riverside.

**Beetroot Kvass Recipe**

Ingredients for 1 big collective (+- 10 humans)

- 2 beetroots
- 2 teaspoons of salt
- 2 literes of water
- Big clean jar

Peel the skin of the beetroot. You can feed these skins to the bacteria and species on the compost. Cut the beetroot into chunks. Put them in the jar. Add the salt and then add water until the whole jar is filled. Shake or stir your beetroot kvass every day. After a few days little bubbles will start to appear. Taste the kvass and season according to your own taste preference. Let the beetroot kvass ferment for up to one week. Afterwards you can keep the kvass in your fridge.

2. **Instruction: Digesting the past, consuming the future.**

By drinking beetroot kvass we activate the mouth as a test environment and we cultivate a fruitful collaboration with the plants in the kvass and with the microorganisms on our tongue, in our mouth, and in our digestive system.

Get to know each other via an opening question.

*Can you introduce yourself shortly and name 1 type of foam you like or that pops up in your mind? To which landscape is this foam connected?*

3. **Instruction: Establish, activate, and reflect on foamy collectives**

Ingredients:

- Pencils / markers / chalk / paint
- Paper (can be big piece that fills the whole table or one sheet of A4 per person)
- Yourself or a group of people

1. Choose a pencil / marker / piece of chalk or paint. Think of who you want to become a collective foam with. You can depart from either an existing collaboration or collective you are in, but you can also think of non-human collaborators like plants, microorganisms, a landscape, or a material. Why do you wish to establish this collective?

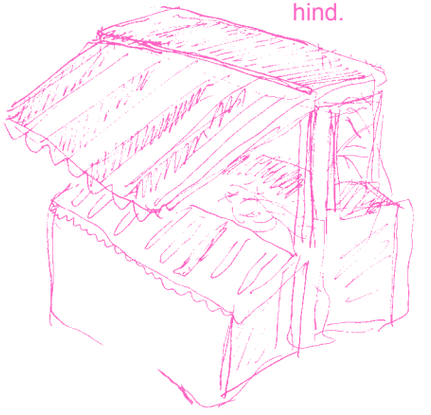
2. Imagine what this collaboration looks like as foam. What kind of bubbles fit this collaboration? Big bubbles or small and are there many bubbles or only a few? Are the bubbles close or do they need space? How are these bubbles connected? Draw this constellation.

3. What are the conditions that enabled this foam to exist? When will the foam collapse? Can you write down some words in and around the bubbles that highlight these conditions as well as what makes this collaboration fruitful.



4. What does this foam leave behind? If we see foam as a fertile ground for new life, bringing seeds, bacteria, ideas, or projects to land, what does your foam collective bring into the world? Draw or write what this foam leaves behind.

5. Make a round and explore everyone's foam collective.



Paul Smullenberg

recipes

## Pineapple chutney

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 3 red onions, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 pineapples peeled, cored, and chopped into small chunks
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- thumb-sized piece ginger, finely chopped
- 250g soft light brown sugar
- 175ml cider vinegar

*Heat the oil in a large heavy-based pan. Tip in the onions and spices and cook for 5 mins until fragrant. Add the rest of the ingredients plus 1 tsp salt and simmer for 1 hr until dark golden and thick. Pour into sterilised jars and allow to cool before covering.*



## Corn Salsa Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 can of sweet yellow corn kernels
- 6 ripe tomatoes, diced
- 3 bosui/spring onions
- 3 jalapeño, diced (remove seeds for a milder flavor)
- 6 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 3 fresh lime, juice of
- salt and fresh pepper to taste

1. *Open the can of corn and drain it*
2. *Cut the tomatoes in cubes*
3. *Slice the bosui/spring onion*
4. *Cube the jalapeños*
5. *chop the cilantro*
6. *Add everything together, season it, and add lime juice*

## Mexican Mushrooms

Ingredients:

- Champignon/mushroom
- 2 tablespoon Smoked paprika
- 1 bunch koriander
- 3 tablespoon cumin
- 3 limes
- pepper and salt

1. *Thinly slice the mushrooms*
2. *Add the smoked paprika and cumin*
3. *Bake it til caramelised*
4. *Add lime juice and koriander*

## Mango and Coconut Sunny side up eggs

Ingredients:

- Coconut egg white
- 600 ml coconut milk
- 24 cardamom
- 1 bottle vanilla extract (38 ml)
- 72 grams agar agar
- Handful of lime leaves
- 10 tablespoon agave syrup

1. Break the cardamom seeds
2. Add cardamom seeds, 3 liter coconut milk and 10 tablespoon agave syrup and bring to a boil
3. Add 72 grams of agar agar
4. Simmer for 1 minute
5. Sift everything into measuring cup
6. Call Paul (important)
7. Add three liter of coconut milk and leave to cool
8. At the right time pour into the round molds on the mirror

## Make alginate solution

1. Mix 4 gram sodium alginate in 920 ml water Stick Blend and wait half an hour

## Mango egg yolks

Ingredients:

- 1 kg frozen mango
- 100 gram sugar
- 300 liter water
- 13 gram calcium lactate

1. Cook 1 kg frozen mango, 100 gram sugar and 300 liter water
2. Stick Blend 13 gram of calcium lactate
3. Divide the mango coulis over the molds and freeze them
4. Get them out of the mold
5. put them for 3 minutes in the alginate solution
6. Take them out and let them drain
7. Put it on the pannacotta in the middle, so it looks like a sunny side up egg
8. *Put it on the pannacotta in the middle, so it looks like a sunny side up egg*

## Pico de Gallo
Ingredients:

- 3 small finely chopped red onions
- 3 medium jalapeño or serrano peppers, ribs and seeds removed, finely chopped (decrease or omit if sensitive to spice, or add another if you love heat)
- lime juice
- 2 ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt, more to taste
- 12 ripe red tomatoes, chopped
- 3 bunch finely chopped fresh cilantro

1. *In a medium serving bowl, combine the chopped onion, jalapeño, lime juice, and salt. Let it marinate for about 5 minutes while you chop the tomatoes and cilantro.*
2. *Add the chopped tomatoes and cilantro to the bowl and stir to combine. Taste, and add more salt if the flavors don't quite sing.*
3. *For the best flavor, let the mixture marinate for 15 minutes or up to several hours in the refrigerator. Serve as a dip, or with a slotted spoon or large serving fork to avoid transferring too much watery tomato juice with your pico. Pico de gallo keeps well in the refrigerator, covered, for up to 4 days*



## Pickled chipotle onions
Ingredients:

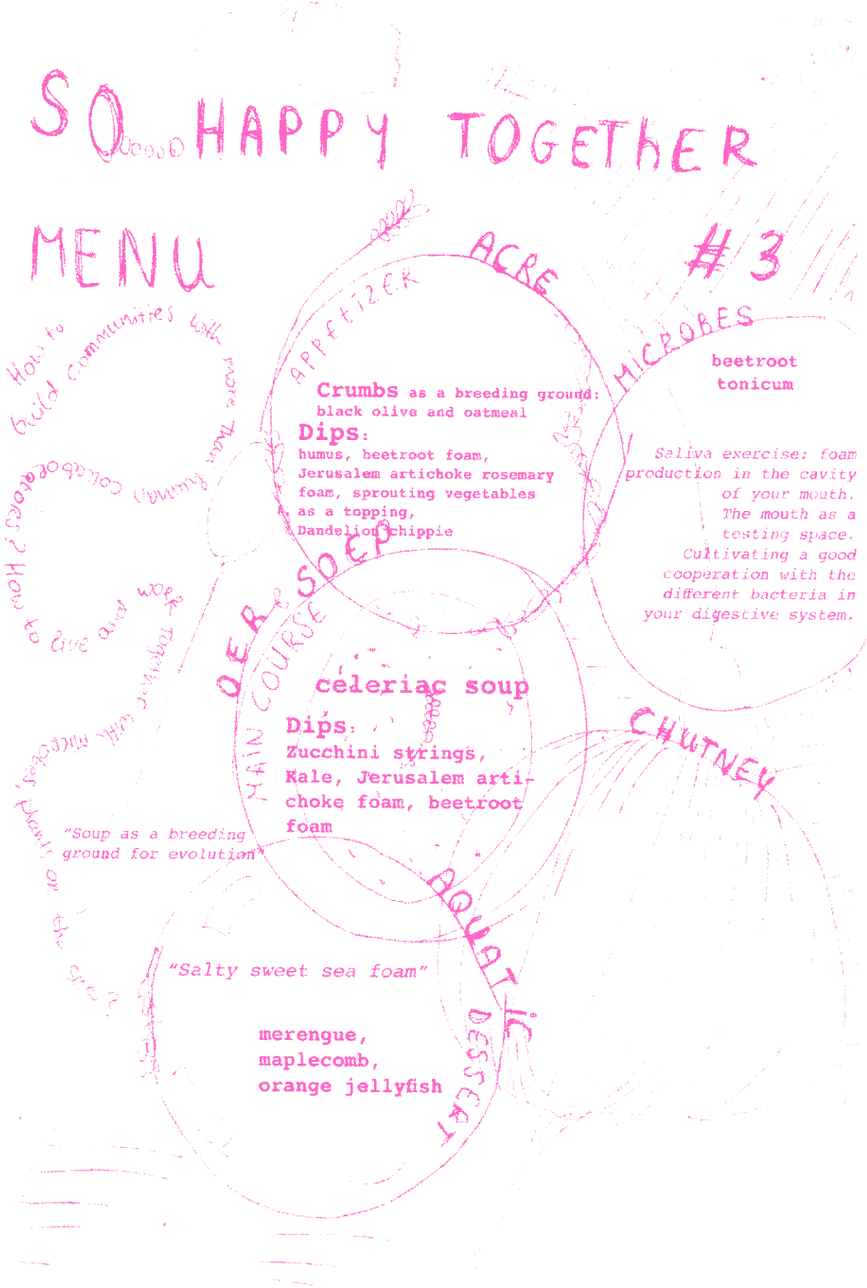
- 10 large red onions, peeled and very thinly sliced* – for best effect, use a mandolin
- 1 liter vinegar
- 2500 ml water
- 3 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 8 tablespoons sugar
- chipotle peppers

1. *Heat the vinegar mixture. In a small saucepan, stir together the vinegar, water, salt, and your desired amount of sweetener. Cook over medium-high heat until the mixture reaches a simmer. (Or alternately, you can heat the mixture in the microwave.)*
2. *Combine in a jar. Place the thinly-sliced onions and chipotle in a jar. Pour the hot vinegar mixture over the onions, screw on the lid, and shake the onions briefly until they are evenly coated with the vinegar mixture*
3. *Marinate. Let the onions marinate for 30 minutes. (You may need to press the onions down with a spoon so that they are all submerged under the vinegar mixture.)*

## Radish salad
Ingredients:

- radish
- 2 red onion, diced
- dressing

1. *Slice the radishes as thin as possible dice the onion add the dressing*
2. *2. dice the onion*
3. *Add the dressing*


SO HAPPY TOGETHER
#3
MENU
ACRE
APPETIZER
Crumbs as a breeding ground: black olive and oatmeal
Dips:
humus, beetroot foam, Jerusalem artichoke rosemary foam, sprouting vegetables as a topping,
Dandelion chippie
MICROBES
beetroot tonicum
Saliva exercise: foam production in the cavity of your mouth. The mouth as a testing space. Cultivating a good cooperation with the different bacteria in your digestive system.
How to build communities with more than humans
Cauldcookeries 2 hour
Give and wee
Tempeh milk microbes
MAIN COURSE SOUP
celeriac soup
Dips:
Zucchini strings, Kale, Jerusalem artichoke foam, beetroot foam
CHUTNEY
"Soup as a breeding ground for evolution"
AQUATIC DESSERT
"Salty sweet sea foam"
merengue,
maplecomb,
orange jellyfish

MENU
SO HAPPY TOGETHER #2
ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION
JALAPEÑO
CILANTRO
PEPPER
MUSHROOM
SMOKED PAPRIKA
CAYENNE
CINNAMON
KIDNEY BEANS
PIMENTO
RED WINE VINEGAR
VEGETABLE BROTH
TOFU
SESAME OIL
MUSTARD
TURMERIC
PINEAPPLES
RED CHILI
CORN TORTILLAS
SCALLIONS
RAPESEED OIL
WATER
SUGAR
VINEGAR
POTATO STARCH
SALT
BETA CAROTENE
ANTI OXIDANT E385
LEMON
ONION
JACKFRUIT
LIME
CORIN
GARLIC
CHIPOTLE
SUNFLOWER OIL
RADISH
TEMPE
KEEMP HEARTS
KEEMP PASTA
SAMBAL
HANDFUL JUNGLE
REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION
COCONUT MILK
CARDAMOM
MANGO
LIME
GINGER
SOY SAUCE
CONCRETE EXPERIENCE
RICE
BOK CHOY
BELL PEPPER
MANE
CUCUMBER
WOODLES
PEANUTS
LIME JUICE
CHERRY TOMATOS
SCALLIONS
JALAPEÑO
CILANTRO
ORANGE JUICE
SESAME OIL
ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION
POTATO STARCH
WATER
FOOD COLOURING E102
FOOD COLOURING E150
ETHANOL
EMULSIFIER E433
FOOD COLOURING E133
FOOD COLOURING E133
KLIMBOK ESSA
PRESERVATIVE E202
VANILLA
MANGO
WATER
MANGO
SUGAR
CALCIUM LACTATE
68

# cooking up collectivity

## digestivo

Contributions by
Wan Ing Que

so happy together

digestivo

**Find the fertile ground**
**Interview with Wan Ing Que**

**Bios**



Recently, Limestone Books in Maastricht, an artist-run bookstore, received a two-star review on Google Maps for being "unwelcoming" and "only show[ing] a limited selection of books with a certain agenda". Obviously, this was a reference to the pro-Palestinian literature and artwork displayed there. STAR RATINGS are thus a double-edged sword. In their contemporary form of social media FEEDBACK and online ratings, they superficially appear to have collectivised a formerly exclusive editorial regime. In reality, they demonstrate how bottom-up, do-it-yourself participation can end up serving both libertarian platform capitalism and personal vendettas. This example demonstrates that TRYING OUT and SHARING are not valuable by themselves. The same goes for self-organised activities like SCREENINGS in relation to the off-the-shelf corporate social media. The very existence of these platforms forces communities to think more critically about their own understanding of participation, and community organisation.

STAR RATINGS - FEEDBACK - TRY OUT - SHARING - SCREENINGS

# Find the fertile ground with Wan Ing Que

## Interview

*A conversation with Ying (Wan Ing Que), curator Happenings & Anarchive at Roodkapje, Katinka de Jonge, and Simon Kentgens, organisers of the So Happy Together public programme.*

*Transcription & light linguistic editing of conversation by Florian Cramer & Wan Ing Que.*

**This conversation, between Ying, Simon, and Katinka, took place in November 2024, at Simon's studio in Rotterdam, seven months after the final, collective moment of the So Happy Together programme in April 2024, and ten months into Ying's new role at Roodkapje as curator Happenings & Anarchive.**

**The conversation looked at how some of the questions and propositions that had emerged from the So Happy Together programme had (or hadn't) been embedded into the Roodkapje programme and community, as well as Ying's broader perspectives on collective practice and community organising.**



## Community at Roodkapje

Simon & Katinka: To talk about our part of the story…When we created our program around collectivity at Roodkapje, we initially focused on the Hamburger Community. Later, we opened that up further to see the entirety of Roodkapje, with its larger body of volunteers and affiliates, as a collective, in order to see what's already happening there, too…

Ying: For me, it was great to enter a space that was so focused on collective practice, because I really think this is something that we need to do. Although I have my reservations about this trend, as I tend to be a little suspicious of anything that becomes a trend in the art world. Still, I think it's necessary that we move from the individualist, sole author artist to community and collective practice.

Maybe one of my reservations about the residency was that the artists were made into a collective. At our first meeting I said to them: *"Look, I know you all come from collective practice, but I don't think this is how a collective is formed. You have been curated, selected by a jury. So this is an unnatural collective. In my experience, that's not how a collective forms".*

I feel that Roodkapje as an organisation has a very DIY (do-it-yourself) or DIT (do-it-together) attitude. It's quite underground, coming from punk and queer scenes, and has collectivity woven into its space.

*Roodkapje as a space gathers many communities. So I am not sure if a program like So Happy Together was necessary to bring collectivity into Roodkapje, and I was not sure what the goal was. What should happen? What should change in the space? If it was to move the Hamburger Community from individual work to collective practice, great – you succeeded, and thank you, it's very nice to work like that.*

The organisation itself however is already very community-based. It's not an anarchist space. There is a lot of self-organisation, but we have a director, we have these existing hierarchies, there are the volunteers and then there is a floor manager. And there's the question of who gets paid. But I am not sure if that was the intention, or if they wanted to break certain hierarchies, as one example, or to collectivise decision making and programming beyond the Hamburger Community, as another.

## Capitalist pressures

Katinka: Collective practice is very, very different from institutional practice, for example, from the perspective of how time is approached. But what exactly is this difference? How can we pinpoint it? But also help each other to find common ground? I am not sure what we did for the organisation, but I think we asked some questions, looking for a kind of friction between collective and institutional practice, and how this could also be played out within Roodkapje as an organisation.

Ying: What you said about the violence between institutional time and community time, and how to find common ground in that – that's a big question. I have a lot of these discussions, like with the young artists who work in the Burgertrut and the bar, etc., because they say, *"Yes, the institution, and this and that…!"* Roodkapje, of course, is an institution. But if you compare it to, say, a museum or a white cube, I think that barely applies to us. In Roodkapje there is an art program, but it doesn't compare to a highbrow art institution. The level of institutional pressure is of course high, because we are under capitalism. It is an institutional problem, like the funding cycle.

Katinka: That's exactly what came out of our work. That Roodkapje itself is caught in a logic of production.

Simon: The pressure to produce in Roodkapje also became a pressure on the community. That meant that after the events, including the community events, there was no time for reflection processes.



## Common Ground

Ying: I don't think that is only Roodkapje's problem. It's an institutional problem because of the economy we live in. I don't know how to solve it. The real question is about what we have in common…

Katinka: What actually connects us, even if we have the same jobs in different institutions…

Ying: Exactly. Why do these volunteers come and want to spend their time in this space? What brings you together? What binds you? There is a common ground that brings

people there. So what is it that the volunteers want to do together?

The question of lacking time for reflection is a general problem of capitalism. I always try to slow the f… down. It's difficult. But I think there are loopholes.

It's not just the funding cycles that trap us. We have a lot of super passionate, committed people, and there is a lack of space in the city to organise things, so the demand for Roodkapje as a space from the outside is also really high. And there are great people who come to us and want to do amazing things. So you want to help them all, until you realise: oh wait, now I've planned five events a week, but we actually don't have the capacity. And then people start grinding, not because there is pressure from the funding bodies, but because they want to give people space to do amazing things. Now I've put a sticker in the office that says: "If you feel no, say no" (laughs).



## Social Practice

Katinka: There's also a question about Roodkapje's responsibility as a cultural organisation…

Ying: I think that cultural and arts institutions and organisations have a great responsibility to facilitate activism. One part I'm interested in is building and experimenting with an alternative to capitalism. And then there's another part, which is organising. Organising, I think, has a more collective purpose than activism. Activism can be any person who goes to a protest with a sign and then posts it on Instagram. I'm more interested in the organising part, where there's a clear goal of politicising people, a bringing together of people for political struggle, engaging in political education, and activating people to become part of the fight against oppression and exploitation.

So in these two areas I think Roodkapje has an interesting role to play. Because within art and culture there's the potential for a radical imagination necessary to prefigure these alternatives by experimenting with what they could be.

How can we learn from each other through this exchange of knowledge and also implement it infrastructurally? I think the commons is an important approach, especially when it comes to economics, that there are alternative economies. And I think an art institution can be a commons.

## Romanticising collectivity and Toxicity

Simon: In one of our previous conversations, I remember that you brought up the term "toxic collectivity"…

Ying: Really?!?

Katinka: I think you were responding to two members from The Post Collective, one from Libya and one from Egypt, who used that term when talking about the collectivist societies they come from.
In their interpretation
of the term, a collective can also mean that you are not free and that the whole group decides what you can and can't do. This has been described by them as "toxic".

Ying: One thing I really appreciated from that conversation, which I still use now to check myself, is that they said you have to be aware of where the fertile ground is. Which is so obvious, but when they said it, it just stayed with me: If you want to flourish, you need to find the fertile ground. If you are not feeling energised, if you are not feeling appreciated, if you are feeling disappointed, then the ground is toxic and you need to leave. That totally stuck with me, like: YES, check your soil, it's real… That said, one of my mentors recently emphasised how the detoxification of institutional soil is also very important and necessary work.

After 12 years of community organising as part of several collectives, I feel it is important to address the romanticisation of collective practice.

A lot of people who want to become a collective forget that there are a lot of structures and strategies and methods. Coming from anarchist organising myself, our trainings were filled with things like, *"How do you facilitate a meeting"?* It really goes into super-basic things like: how do you make a good agenda? What are the roles? How do you rotate? How do you build commitment? When you think about the consensus process, how do you make sure everyone is heard? How do you make decisions?

There are a host of methods and structures that are super-basic that I think art has skipped over. When I was teaching in an art academy, the Dutch Art Institute, I also noticed that it was skipped, this basic method of how to run a meeting, you know? I've seen it so many times that a project is started and a great conversation is going on but it's not recorded and there's no note taking and there's no process afterwards like "hey, what did we talk about"…

Simon: Yes…

Ying: That's one part that I think is missing from collective practice in art, a lot. The other part is toxic collectivity. It's not just in art, there is always a reproduction of what has been imposed on us. We have internalised oppressive behaviors, ways of thinking and power structures. Without a conscious, collective practice of unlearning and dismantling those things, without conflict mediation, our collectivity will remain toxic.

Lastly, there's the question for any community organiser who's building collective practice and bringing communities together: how to practice sustainably, in a way that the work continues even when you leave, and in a sense that no individual is irreplaceable?

# bios

## Roodkapje & Hamburger Community

Roodkapje is Rotterdam's local laboratory for ART X LIVE X FOOD, and everything in between. We come from a long background of self-organising and resetting definitions, with a strong DIT-mentality instilled in everything we do. Roodkapje really becomes Roodkapje when everything clumps together, when boundaries between presentation forms, audience groups, genres and disciplines disappear, when artist and visitor come face to face with each other. We are attracted to collectivity, because we believe it facilitates thrilling, unpredictable and necessary forms of togetherness. As such, we provide fertile ground for wild experimentation and loud encounters where the program comes boiling hot from the deep fryer. Roodkapje runs a 10 month artist residency focused on interdisciplinary collaboration called the Hamburger Community. In this residency, we emphasize the collective over the individual which requires a letting go of the ego and an unlearning of classic art practices and training. Rather than static productions, we are excited to give space to grand, artistic gestures where things are dynamic, surprising and playful. To do so, Roodkapje offers the Hamburger residents the organisational support and financial capacity to realise a collectively envisioned public program in the shape of Happenings, guided by and in collaboration with mentors and Roodkapje's team.

## De Onkruidenier

Artist collective de Onkruidenier was founded in 2013 and the team consists of Jonmar van Vlijmen, Rosanne van Wijk and Ronald Boer. The collective investigates historical, cultural and potential transformations of nature and its potential to evolve humans. They do fieldwork – often in conjunction with audiences – collecting plants, the stories and histories associated with them. As ecosystem futurists, they speculate on aquatic culture to arrive at new interpretations of the relationship between humans and (urban) nature, both above and below sea level. An important role is played here by questioning systems that are usually taken for granted. In the development of their work, interactions with the public and experts such as farmers, residents and scientists create new stories.

## Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats

The 'Doe-Het-Zelf Werkplaats' is a free-to-use, collectively-run autonomous (squatted) workshop space and community garden in Rotterdam Noord operated by volunteers. Visitors to the workshop come to fix their own bikes with tools and spare parts that have been donated. Centered around Learning Together and anti-judgement, previous knowledge of bikes or tools are not at all necessary and the volunteers are always there to work together with visitors; building new relations by sharing in problem solving, reciprocal generosity and mutual empowerment. The 'Garden of Learning' hosts many herbs free to harvest for the neighborhood; and through relating to one another, holds the ability for different desires and backgrounds towards plants and soil.



## Droom-iris

Iris van Velzen, known as Droom.iris, is a freelance graphic designer, visual artist and fulltime letter lover located in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She focuses on the design of visual identities, and all kinds of printed matter, such as books or publications. Her artistic practice includes experimenting with bold typography, colourful shapes & printing techniques such as Riso-print & screen-printing. She's also an aspiring self-publisher using Riso-print as medium. She creates striking visual concepts using typography, shapes and colour, each unique for the project they were created for. Iris is also very interested in experimenting with rules and grids in design and rethinking these elements, be it in typography, type-design, print or other materials.

## SOUPSPOON COLLECTIVE

SOUPSPOON COLLECTIVE is based in Rotterdam, and consist of Raffia Li (CN), Maoyi Qiu (CN), Miyoung Chang (KR), Dakota Guo (CN), Avita Maheen(BD), and Pitchaya Ngamcharoen (TH). Attempting to cultivate a common, Asian contextualised space for the particularities that elude translation, it aims to convene a generative forum of "minor gestures" and "micro politics"

## Iconoclasistas

Iconoclasistas is a duo formed by Julia Risler (PhD in Social Sciences) and Pablo Ares (self-taught graphic artist) in May 2006 and based in Argentina, which began as a social communication laboratory from which they produce graphics (posters, publications, cartographies, etc.) and urban interventions. At present, its activity unfolds in three dimensions of knowledge and practices: artistic (poetics of production and graphic devices), political (territorial activism and institutional drifts) and academic (critical pedagogies and participatory research). It is part of a dynamic network of affinity and solidarity dispersed in different parts of the world map, participating assiduously in talks, meetings and exhibitions in museums, festivals, symposiums, biennials and congresses both nationally and internationally.

## HumDrumPress

HumDrumPress approaches publishing as an expanded practice and works with a purpose-built, commons-informed publishing model to create all of their publications. As part of their publishing model, HumDrumPress have revised each stage of the traditional publishing cycle to (re)make the processes to be as communal, open-access, and multivocal as possible. They work with tools and methods such as open book events, collective editing, collaborative design, logbooks, and open-access publishing, and are committed to activating the knowledge contained in a publication far before and long after it takes on material form. HumDrumPress was co-founded in 2021 and continues to be co-run by Amy Gowen (Rotterdam) & Wibke Bramesfeld (Berlin).

**Amy Gowen**
Is a writer and editor. She plays with text-based practices across the mediums of writing, publishing, radio, and curating. She co-runs the commons-informed publishing project HumDrumPress, hosts the bi-monthly radio show Off Margin on Radio Worm about text that moves off the page, and (secretly) writes experimental fiction.

**Papaya Kuir**
Papaya Kuir is an independent intersectional collective for and by Trans & Queer Latinx immigrants and asylum seekers.

**Jatiwangi art Factory**
Founded in 2005, Jatiwangi art Factory (JaF) is a community that embraces contemporary art and cultural practices as part of the local discourse of life in a rural area of West Java, Indonesia. JaF's diverse activities, always involving the local public, include a video festival, a music festival, a residency program, a monthly discussion, and a radio station.
At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jatiwangi's clay industry made it the largest producer of roof tiles in Southeast Asia. One hundred years later, in 2005, using the same clay, JaF encouraged the people of Jatiwangi to create a collective awareness and identity for their region through arts and cultural activities. In doing so, JaF seeks to cultivate clay with greater dignity and increase the collective happiness of the community.
The Kota Terrakota (Terracotta City) project thus marks the beginning of a new clay culture for Jatiwangi, one that redesigns the city based on the wishes of its people and their collective agreement. In this sense, Kota Terrakota addresses 'terra' not only as a material, but also as territory, or idea (in Bahasa Indonesia; bahan, lahan, dan gagasan).

**Katinka de Jonge**
Katinka de Jonge is a Brussels based artist and researcher. Often working through collaborative structures, she questions the role of collectivity, polyphony and authority within different professional and nonprofessional contexts, and combines this theoretical approach with her artistic practice. Starting from a keen observational capacity, she develops actions and performances on specific sites. She enters into a dialogue with a well-chosen context - a neighbourhood, a specific professional group, an art house... and thereby focuses on the tension between everyday reality and the invisible power relations at play in this reality. She captures these dynamics in different media: in text, installations, relational performances, audio tours, publications... Dialogue and performativity are recurring strategies, and as 'social sculptures' the major issues of power dynamics are invariably translated into playful action.

**One Field Fallow**
One Field Fallow is a socio-cultural project and organisation located in Brussels. Sprouted from a disused night shop, OFF serves as a workspace for social-artistic research, a neighbourhood laboratory, and a meeting point for external individuals, collectives, organisations, and neighbourhood cohesion. Their organisation and its participants operate horizontally, inspired by the rhythm of the seasons and agricultural cycles. The work of OFF aligns with the logic of the 'drieslagstelsel' (three-field system) that circulates between harvesting, sowing, and fallowing. The ability to rest and be rewilded is integral to what they intend with this space. Harvesting and sowing each focus on a different temporality of the organisation.

**Florian Cramer**
Professor for artistic research and emerging forms of cultural production at Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

**The Post Collective**
The Post Collective (2018, BE) is an autonomous platform for co-creation, co-learning and cultural activism. It is initiated by Marcus Bergner, Sawsan Mirra Markhaeva and Elli Vassalou; artists, activists and researchers with different means and access to artistic production and education due to their legal status. It introduces a range of artistic, cultural and employment opportunities, and provides a commoning environment for its members and their kin. Generative modes of kinship, solidarity, dialogue and storytelling form the basis of their speculative and experiential approaches to art and design. They aim to develop creative alternatives beyond the dominant systems of control and exclusion they are facing. This means facilitating the position where they do not struggle to be assimilated but rethink and re-conceptualise critically a future together as community.

**KraakSpreekUur**
Need a house? Sick of spending all your money on rent? Squatting Info Hour Rotterdam will help you to realise your wildest squatting dreams. If you look around the city you'll see many empty vacancies. They could be yours! We'll help you think of ways to break and enter through loopholes in the law. We are NOT an anti-squat corporation. We are NOT a corporation or secret society. We MIGHT be ANTIFA. But really we are just a bunch of freaks who like to have a roof over our heads. And if we can't have it, then we're taking it.

**Marloes de Vries**
Roodkapje's director Marloes de Vriaes has been at the helm of Roodkapje for 4 years. With a degree in teaching, she started her work life as an editor at VPRO Dorst, progressed from there to curating at MaMA and teaching computer science, and in 2021 returned to the central thread of her life: working with interdisciplinary artists in an open source way.

**Reading Room Rotterdam**

Reading Room Rotterdam is a nomadic roaming library traveling throughout the city. RRR works in partnership with London based publisher Pluto Press, and is a part of a larger network of Reading Rooms located in cities across the UK. The collection features radical leftist books, artist books, and self-published books and zines. The library functions as a gathering agent for communities to entangle with one another and for knowledge to be disseminated. Through public events and the library service, the RRR offers an exchange of mediums of knowledge, be it through shared dinners, workshops, gardens, or text. Reading Room Rotterdam is organised, facilitated, and ever-transformed by Marika Vandekraats, an artist and part-time librarian based in Rotterdam.

**Simon Kentgens**

Simon Kentgens (he/she) approaches (self-)organisation as an artistic practice. He makes, researches, publishes, teaches, initiates and organises in different collective constellations, exploring ways of commoning, always together with others. He is part of Sunflower Soup, an artist collective that focuses on horizontal and collaborative ways of making that challenge forms of oppression and welcome a multitude of voices. Sunflower Soup recently founded the PPP, the Political Party of Potatoes, an experiment in how to collectively develop a kind of politics developed through bottom-up making and doing. He has recently started a new art and community space in Breda (NL) called Clublokaal. Clublokaal brings together members of different collective communities, inside and outside the arts, to explore common ground and share knowledge about building self-organised communities and collective autonomy through collaborative ways of making.

**Singing Club Rotterdam**

Singing Club Rotterdam is the anti-choir for all voices.
Excerpts from the co-created manifesto read: Learning not to give a fuck; (Not rehearsing, not getting better); Listening to all my voices; Can be a bit cult-y at times. Since 2019, members of the group meet on a bi-weekly basis for a club-based, member-led sonic experience. Together with a rotating pool of facilitators, artists, movers and sounders, the Singing Club has developed into a space for exploration of facilitation and artistic development (on the part of the session leaders); and the positioning and strengthening of a community of vocal explorers in Rotterdam. There have been several forays out of the club's home-base at Roodkapje (previously WORM): they have recorded a tape, have performed in a number of performances, such as: Simon Keizer's installation Humores Humor at Roodkapje; Sing With Your Mouthful at O. Festival 2024 in Rotterdam; Flipchart series at iii in Den Haag.

**Paul Smullenberg**

Paul Smullenberg. Paul is the chef of the Burgertrut. For Roodkapje he did multiple art dinners over the years. He is also involved in crazy food experiences like Goblin Feast.

**Wan Ing Que**

Wan Ing Que, or Ying, is a cultural worker, educator and facilitator with a background in anarchist anthropology and action-research. Her work manifests in social and collective practice, with story, radio and program as her usual mediums. As a facilitator she is focused on anti-oppressive and consensus based methodology. Currently she is curator of Happenings and Anarchive at cultural center Roodkapje in Rotterdam and a guide for the Traces of Slavery walks in Utrecht.

**Hocus Bogus Print**

Hocus Bogus is a publishing project initiated and run by Dennis Muñoz Espadiña, in 2015. Hocus Bogus was created to share artistic "B-side" material in the form of printed matter.

Muñoz's own artistic practice would often incorporate print, connecting to performative interventions or larger projects. In its early years HBP dealt mostly with the distribution of zines and fringe artistic content. In 2021 we decided to take matters into our own hands; buying a secondhand RZ 1070 E stencil duplicating machine, and other printing and bookmaking equipment. HBP approaches printed matter as a vehicle of resistance, un-censoring and an opportunity to work together on process driven projects.

**Questions Collective**

Questions Collective is a colourful, energetic and socially engaged entity that makes multidisciplinary art to question the status quo. With self-mockery, we rebel against the rules of the art world to break it open and make it more inclusive: We do not pretend to hold the truth, but dare to ask questions and experiment. We encourage others to be curious, question the rules and claim their own place in the (art) world. Reality is a construction we can build ourselves, step by step. Collaboration is essential in this. QC was born from a group of artist friends who felt the need to support each other in their individual practice, and this led to artistic collaborations. We combine our diverse backgrounds in design, music, theater and visual arts in creating cross-disciplinary work. QC starts a project from a topic and then looks for the most appropriate art form to tell that story.

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